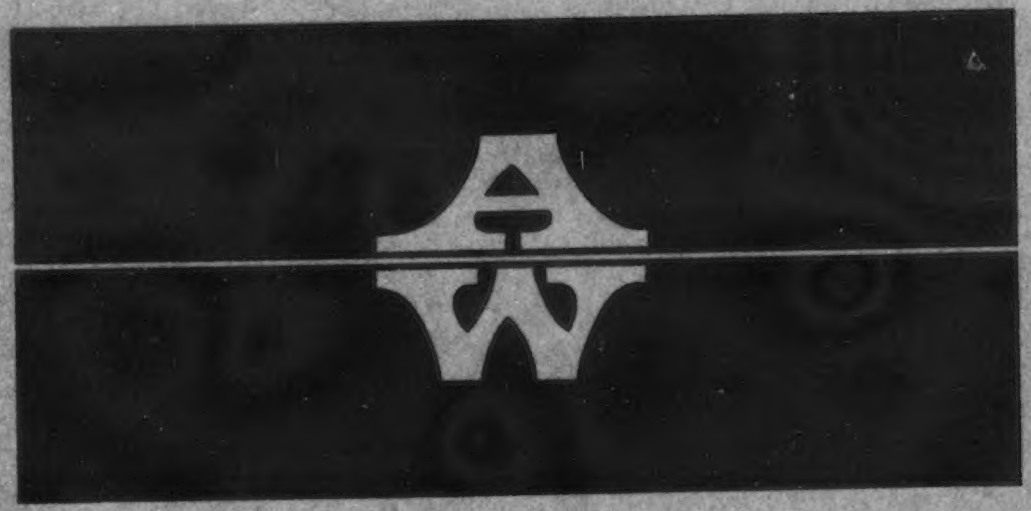
THE

# AMERICAN WEST

COVER: Peskelechaco, of the Republican Pawnees, painted by Charles Bird King during an Indian delegation's visit to Washington, D. C., in 1821. For more about this momentous junket, see the article starting on page 18.

*(Danish National Museum)*



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***A climber dangles from Lost Arrow Spire above Yosemite Valley, California.***

ED COOPER

# RED CARPET FOR A ROMANOFF

## *1872 Hunting Party – Western Style – in Honor of Russia's Grand Duke Alexis*

by John I. White

MANY TALL TALES were circulated by William F. Cody and others with equally vivid imaginations concerning history's most publicized buffalo hunt — that fantastic Nebraska prairie party hosted by Lieutenant General Philip Sheridan in January of 1872 to honor young Grand Duke Alexis of Russia. Accordingly, on the hundredth anniversary of the event, it may be refreshing to read an on-the-spot, unembellished account by a journalist who wrote his story each day and dutifully mailed it to his editor.

For making readily available these unvarnished facts, set down on paper immediately after it all happened, we are indebted to Bayard H. Paine (1872–1955), for eighteen years a justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court. Judge Paine dug out the chapters of this contemporary eyewitness description from the files of the *Daily State Journal* at Lincoln and in 1935 published them in an unassuming little book *Pioneers, Indians, and Buffaloes*, printed in the shop of a weekly newspaper, the *Curtis Enterprise*, at Curtis, Nebraska, about twenty miles from where the royal buffalo hunt took place.

GRAND DUKE ALEXIS, fourth son of Czar Alexander II, was a handsome lad of twenty-one, six feet two inches tall, with luxuriant side whiskers and a good command of English. Although his homeland, ruled by the imperialistic Romanoffs, had little in common with democratic America, when the young man arrived here on a goodwill tour, the country, with one notable exception, rolled out the red carpet and showed him the time of his life.

A Russian frigate brought Alexis to New York late in November 1871. Within a few days he and his retinue visited Washington, where President Grant, according to the *New York Times* for November 24, did little more than shake hands at an afternoon stand-up reception. The chief executive, miffed at the antics of the meddling, inept Russian minister, Constantine Catacazy, was unimpressed by Muscovite royalty.

Early in December Alexis began a lengthy stay in Boston, where the hospitality heaped on him almost made up for the cold shoulder given him in the national capital. From Boston



***Grand Duke Alexis (right) and his official escort, General George A. Custer, had this photo taken in Topeka on their return trip from Denver.***

ALL PICTURES: DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY WESTERN COLLECTION

he journeyed to Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Niagara, then to Buffalo for Christmas. Cleveland and Detroit were next on the schedule. On New Year's Day we find the royal visitor doing Chicago, visiting the stockyards and shooting clay pigeons.

At this point Sheridan comes into the picture. Judge Paine quotes the following dispatch from Chicago dated January 4 and printed in the *Daily State Journal* at Lincoln.

---

*The Grand Duke Alexis returns here [Chicago] from Milwaukee this afternoon and leaves tomorrow for St. Louis. Gen. Sheridan has completed plans for a buffalo hunt. The parties will leave the railroad at Fort McPherson and expect to be on the hunt six or eight days. No servants, carriages, or luxuries will be indulged in, the design being to rough it.*

---

Whatever the design and despite Commander in Chief Ulysses S. Grant's disinterest in Russians, the affair turned out to be as lavish a one as the military could possibly provide.

Sheridan, head of the army's operations on the western plains, was aboard the duke's special train when on January 11 it left St. Louis for Omaha, where the party was joined by other army brass including George Armstrong Custer, the boy wonder of the Union forces who had made brigadier at twenty-three and now was serving at a quiet post in Kentucky after five years on the plains hunting Indians and buffalo. In addition to his shoulder-length hair and scraggly moustache, thirty-two-year-old Custer had brought along his best suit of fringed buckskins.

Sheridan, who had staged another buffalo hunt only three months before for a group of eastern bigwigs, knew how to put on a show. In addition to Custer, he had lined up his youthful scout "Buffalo Bill" Cody and had arranged to have Sioux Chief Spotted Tail move an entire village—braves, squaws, papooses, dogs, and all—to a spot on Willow Creek some fifty miles southwest of North Platte, Nebraska, where luxurious Camp Alexis was being set up by a busy contingent of soldiers from Fort McPherson. The grand duke was to see many facets of frontier life all in one spot. As far as seeing buffalo was concerned, Alexis visited America none too soon. A dozen years later the great shaggy beast had disappeared from the prairies, virtually exterminated by professional hide hunters.

THE DUKE'S *Special* chugged onto a siding at North Platte on the night of January 12. Next morning the eager hunters breakfasted in their dining car. The *Daily State Journal* takes it from there with the following, datelined North Platte, January 13. Readers should not be concerned over references to ambulances and hospital tents. No human casualties were expected. A mule-drawn army ambulance just happened to be a convenient means of transporting visitors without mounts. Hospital tents, as the reporter explains, were handy for feeding a large group of hungry nimrods. A Sibley stove also is mentioned. This was a popular army tent heating device about the size of a water bucket.

---

*Five ambulances and a light wagon for baggage and a carriage for the duke met the party, and they immediately started for camp. The camp consists of two hospital tents, ten wall tents, and "A" tents for the servants and soldiers. Three of the wall tents are floored, and the duke's is carpeted. Box stoves and Sibley stoves are provided for the hospital and wall tents. The hospital tents are used as dining tents. An extensive culinary outfit also is taken along. Ten thousand rations of flour, sugar, coffee, and 1,000 pounds of tobacco are being taken along for the Indians. Co. K, 2d Cav., under the command of Captain Eagan, is at the camp. They went out several days ago and have everything in the best shape possible. Co. E, 2d Cav., under the command of Lieut. Stover, acts as escort for the party of the camp, and the whole is under the command of Gen. Palmer of the Omaha Barracks. Lieut. Hayes is quartermaster of the expedition. Mr. Cody, alias "Buffalo Bill," met the duke and party here. A relay of horses is at Medicine Creek, about halfway. They expect to make the trip in eight hours. The buffalo are in grand numbers, within ten miles of the camp. A few days ago 400 Indians were reported at the camp, with their families, and others coming in rapidly.*

---

More on the triumphal journey to Camp Alexis, then an on-the-spot description of the hunt appeared in the *Journal* datelined North Platte, January 15.

---

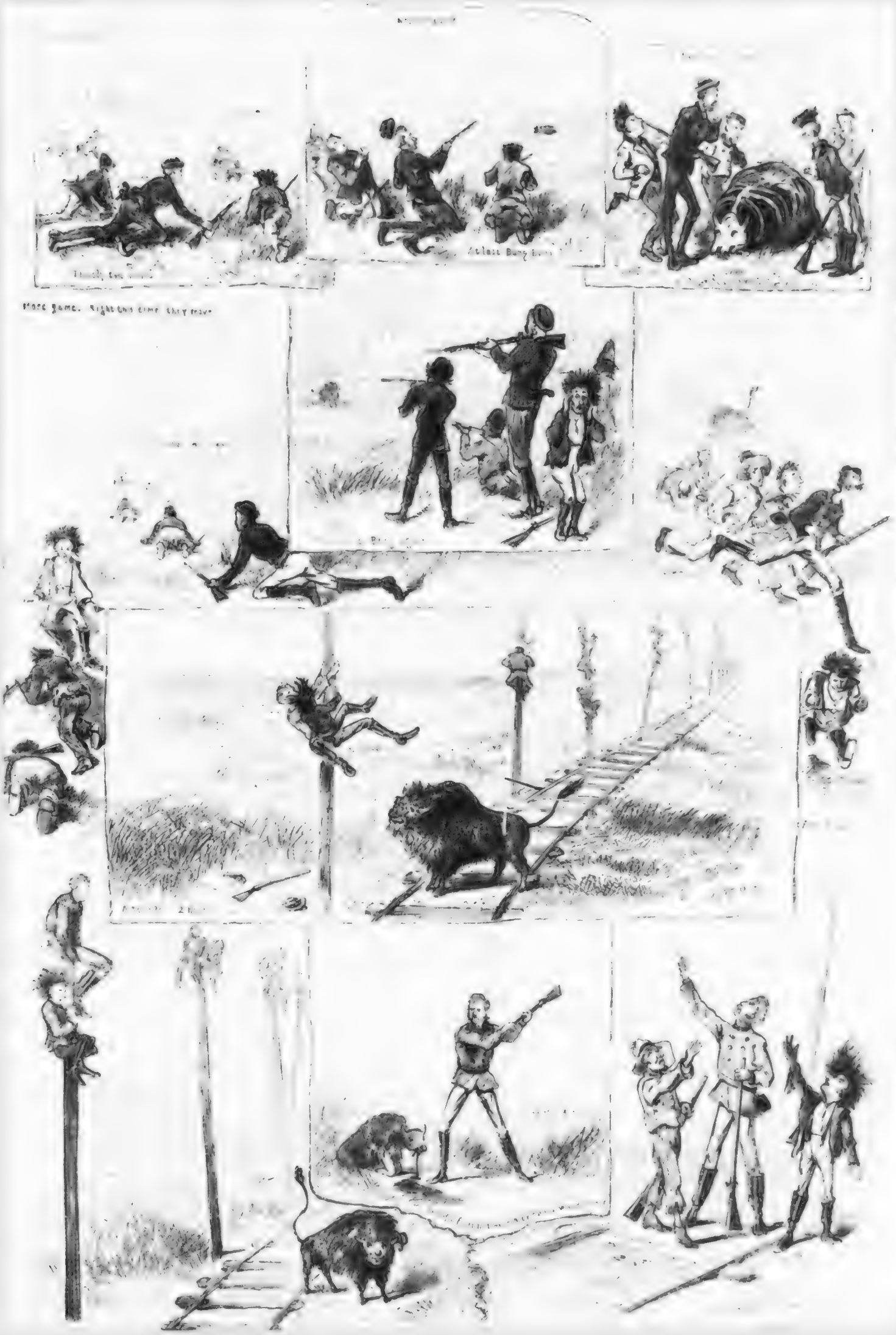
*The grand duke's buffalo hunt has proved a grand success so far in every particular. After leaving the Union Pacific railroad, the party proceeded without any incident of note until they reached the Medicine Valley, about 25 miles south of here. The ambulances were the scene of merriment and hilarity during the trip, and the grand duke seemed to be carried away with the grandeur of the country and the excitement of the trip, and the Russians were highly entertained by the yarns of their military escort about their perilous adventures on the frontier in the past.*

*At the Medicine the party was met by Lieut. Fowler, in command of Co. K, 2d Cav., at a present of sabres. All hands alighted and partook of a sumptuous lunch prepared by orders of Gen. Sheridan for the occasion. From here to the permanent camp there was little to vary the scene except the occasional single-handed chase after a stray buffalo that had not been notified of the impending slaughter.*

*When the party reached the bluffs overlooking the camp,*



**Leslie's Illustrated *captioned this: ". . . the buffalo hunt as it really was, from a sketch by our special artist, from a telegraph pole."***



***To demonstrate their sophistication, the politicians of Kansas held a banquet for Grand Duke Alexis (center), General Sheridan (on Alexis's right), and General Custer (right, in profile).***

*called Camp Alexis in honor of the grand duke, the magnificent 2d cavalry band greeted them with "Hail to the Chief." They reached the camp at 4:30* P.M. *on the 13th, having made the trip in eight hours. Here the evening was spent in great comfort by the guests, who were in the right condition to enjoy the luxuries that Gen. Sheridan and his officers had prepared for them. The weather has been fine all day, and every prospect for a fine day to follow. Everyone retired at an early hour in order to be refreshed for the royal hunt which was arranged for the next day at 8* A.M. *on the 14th, that being the Duke's birthday (his twenty-second).*

*He mounted a gallant charger, properly armed and accoutered for the hunt, accompanied by Generals Switzer, Palmer, Forsyth, and Custer, and Lieutenants Hayes, Fowler, Clark, Stevens, Thomas, and about 20 soldiers. They rode seventeen miles before finding any game, and then came upon a fine herd upon a splendid hunting ground. The grand duke was anxious for the onslaught and was given his first hunt, after which a short chase resulted in his bringing down his first buffalo in splendid style, and proved himself a masterly horseman. The hunt was continued for some two hours and resulted in the killing of between 20 and 30 buffaloes. Generals Custer and Forsyth were both distinguished in the chase. The duke was in splendid spirits and expressed his great delight at the sport.*

*Today as yesterday is a most glorious day for their purpose, being more like September than January. This forenoon the grand surround and war dance is to take place by the Indians, and the whole to wind up with a final hunt this afternoon, in which the gallant "Phil" will take part.*

*The duke was serenaded in his quarters last night by the 2d Cavalry band. The party will break camp tomorrow.*

---

Our reporter mentions the fine weather. Sheridan apparently had an "in" with whoever arranges such things. One week later western Nebraska was hit by a howling blizzard.

The *Journal* described the wind-up of the hunt in a dispatch from North Platte dated January 16.

---

*Yesterday the second and last day of the imperial buffalo hunt opened, and closed most auspiciously in all particulars. The morning was glorious and the sun shone in all its grandeur. The party for the day's hunt was made up as follows: the grand duke was mounted on a superb black charger, dressed in a gray suit, with a revolver by his side; Count Bodesco, Generals Sheridan, Ord, Palmer, and Custer, who was attired in a full suit of buckskin similar to that of Buffalo Bill; Gen. Forsyth, Col. Mike Sheridan, and six or seven other officers. Buffalo Bill acted as on the previous day, but was assisted by a scout called "Shorty" and about thirty soldiers, and Spotted Tail, chief of the Sioux, accompanied by eight selected warriors.*

*The hunters encountered a herd of buffalo after traveling about fifteen miles. Here the hunt began and was followed up in a gay, exciting manner for hours, but owing to the uneven character of the country, it required harder riding and more strategy than on the previous day. The grand duke killed two buffaloes and the Indians eight; Gen. Sheridan two, in two straight shots; Shorty three; Lieut. Stevens one. Buffalo Bill and the other members of the party killed 40, making about 56 in all for the day. Alexis had a buffalo calf that he had killed brought in, also the head of one of the buffaloes that he had killed, which he will have preserved and sent to Russia. The grand duke was greatly elated with his success and threw off all formality and appeared as one of the boys throughout the day. On return of the party from the field of slaughter, when he caught sight of the camp, Alexis began firing a salute with his revolver, which was taken up by all the rest of the party and returned by the persons waiting in camp.*

*The day's sport closed by a grand pow-wow and war dance in front of the duke's tent, witnessed by all the party. After the war dance the duke presented the warriors $50 in half-dollar silver pieces, 20 beautiful blankets, and a number of hunting knives with ivory handles. Previous to the war dance Gen. Sheridan called Spotted Tail to his tent and presented him with a scarlet cap ornamented with beads, a general officer's belt, and a nice dressing gown. He gave them as a present from one chief to another.*

*Col. Mike Sheridan's horse failed him before the hunt was over and had to be led to camp. The animal ridden by Gen. Custer died soon after reaching camp from hard riding, having traveled over fifty miles during the day's hunt. The evening was spent at the camp in hilarity until near the midnight hour, when the tattoo was sounded and all retired in good order.*

*This morning the camp was up at an early hour and at about 9 A.M. the party was moved toward this place (North Platte). The band, which remained at camp, enlivened them with music until they were out of sight and hearing. Seventeen miles out on the return trip they stopped for lunch and got fresh horses. The party reached this place at 5 P.M. today, not quite so fresh looking as on the start, but not much fatigued. Gen. Sheridan and party dined with Alexis in his car. After dinner was over, Buffalo Bill was presented by the duke with a large purse of money and a very valuable scarf pin in acknowledgement of his services on this occasion.*

SHERIDAN AND CUSTER accompanied Alexis to Denver, where additional lavish entertainment was provided by the local elite. While there, these warriors-on-vacation cooked up another buffalo hunt, one which took place near Kit Carson, Colorado, as the royal visitor was returning east. This one, put together in a hurry, lacked the trimmings so evident in the earlier affair. However, the avid hunters again succeeded in lessening the buffalo population.

The tour ended officially at St. Louis. From there Alexis went with his hunting buddy Custer to Kentucky for a visit. Custer then accompanied him to New Orleans and Pensacola, where the duke's frigate picked him up for the homeward journey. While these two travelers were enjoying a steamboat ride down the Mississippi, the *Daily State Journal's* reporter back in Lincoln closed the book on the great buffalo hunt. On February 16 his paper printed the following amusing leftover item on the affair at Camp Alexis. If Elizabeth Custer heard about it, which seems likely, one can imagine her greeting when her dashing cavalryman again appeared on the doorstep of their quarters.

---

*The great pow-wow that ended the buffalo hunt by Spotted Tail and his warriors for Grand Duke Alexis afforded some scenes that ought to be worked up into a dime novel. It is all about the lovely Miss Spotted Tail. She is a modest maiden of some sixteen summers. Several of her admirers vied with each other for her favor. She showed the coyness of her sex, but she was not adverse to admiration. Presents from her admirers began to flow in upon her. Some presented confectionery and fruits, and others such trinkets as they could procure on short notice. The rivalry for her smiles continued while the war dance proceeded. Finally Lieut. Clark of the 2d Cav., who had already made some impression upon her, went over to his tent, opened his trunk, and brought a set of jewelry, which may have been intended for some fairer female, and came back while the war dance was still on, and presented the jewels to her with his compliments as evidence of his admiration and affection, which, it is supposed, the interpreter told her was boundless and undying.*

*Gen. Custer, who had been profuse in his attention to her, stepped forward and, taking advantage of his knowledge of the Indian sign language and vernacular, entered into conversation with her and requested the privilege of putting rings in her ears, which she graciously accorded. He consumed much more time in this pleasant occupation than was necessarily needed, and having adjusted one of them in her ear, without changing his position, put his arms around her neck in order to adjust the other. As she made no objection to this proceeding, he claimed the only reward he could request for his pleasing liberty, and the scene ended by him kissing her. It was done so graciously that old Spotted Tail has no cause to scalp him for his temerity, but if he had done so he would have had a splendid scalp-lock. The other suitors all said it was because Custer in his buckskin hunting suit looked like an Indian chief.*

---

**John I. White** *of Chatham, New Jersey, is a former mapmaker and radio singer of primarily western material. He is a frequent contributor of magazine articles on the West.*

# The Rodilla Towers

## *An Architectural Phenomenon*

by V. P. Chernik

*Detail of the towers, showing seashells, bottles, and plates used in the construction.*

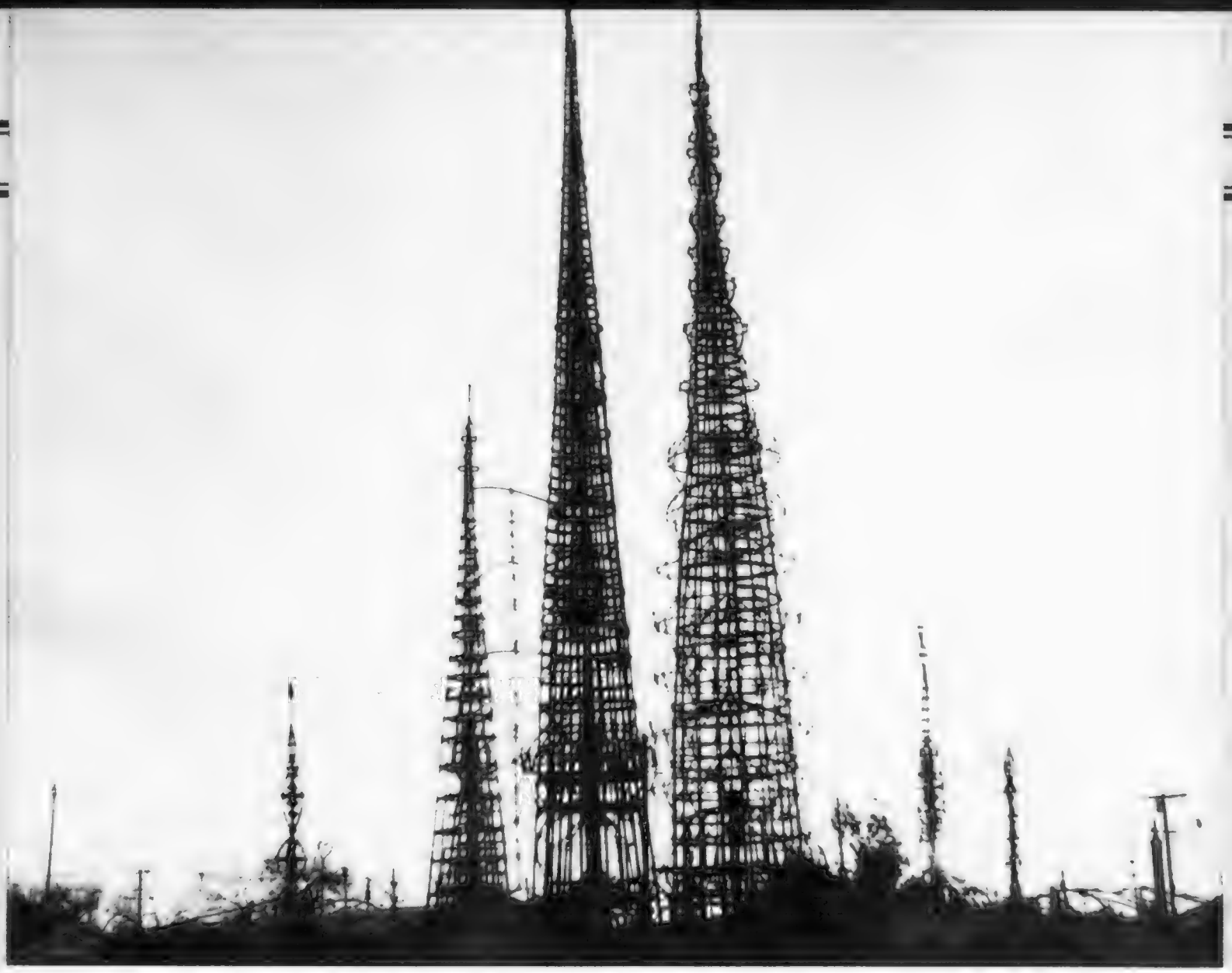
APPEARING IN SILHOUETTE like futuristic oil derricks or the remnant of a derelict World's Fair, the Rodilla Towers rise out of the district of Watts, California, a part of the Los Angeles megalopolis. This forest of steel, cement, seashells, and soft-drink bottles includes fifteen towers in all, the tallest rising to a height of 104 feet; and each of the spires are unique, each unexplainable as to purpose, design, or significance.

Sam Rodilla, an Italian immigrant employed as a tile setter, spent thirty-three years—from 1921 to 1954—erecting these architectural oddities in the backyard of his unpretentious frame house. Rodilla, never offering a complete explanation for his magnificent project, created his own particular garden, an avant-garde rendition of pop art. Fantasy and originality combined with concrete, colored tiles, broken dishes, and bottles to develop this oasis of shapes, spires, and colors in the midst of a city.

The story surrounding their construction is amazing. This man, his knowledge of architecture gleaned from a used set of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, erected his towers alone and completely by hand. He built them out of wire steel, reinforced the rod in place with wire mesh, then applied by hand a mixture of waterproof cement carried in small buckets, and finally climbed the towers using only a window-washer belt for support as he carried his bucket and trowel. Proof of his craftsmanship: some of these towers have existed for fifty years, withstanding gale-like winds, floods, and, finally, the 1933 earthquake which flattened the nearby town of Compton.

Rodilla is acclaimed by some as an artist, his work bringing varied comments from legions of art critics. The towers have been accorded a wide range of epithets from brilliant to pleasant, from unique to freakish.

They have been labeled as "a unique and distinctive work of art and a masterpiece of primitive sculpture" by Kenneth Ross, manager of the Los Angeles Municipal Arts Department. They have been called "a unique example of folk art of national cultural importance" by James J. Sweeney, director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. One of their most famous admirers, among many who have visited the scene, was the poet Carl Sandburg.



PHOTOS BY DORIS CHERNIK

*Like structures from another age or another world, the Rodilla Towers rise above the rooftops and telephone poles of the neighborhood of Watts, near Los Angeles.*

To Rodilla, perhaps the bleak, smog-filled, oil-stenched skies of Watts lacked the brilliance of his native Italy. If the steel buildings and the oil rigs of his new country gave him the notion of bigness, the poetry of his native soil was manifested in his decorative towers.

The backyard of Rodilla's house is an aggregation of towers, walls, fountains, pathways, all done in mosaics with intricate patterns, Hindu, Siamese, or Moorish style. There is a profusion of heart symbols and such tender writings as *Nuestro Pueblo*, "our town."

Decorations, multiformed, multicolored, illuminate this strange Disney-like world of Sam Rodilla. Every inch of the structures is encrusted with seashells, stones, bottles in various fragments, mirrors, dishes, imprints of tools or hands, scrap metal, bed springs; and here and there, in clear lines, is the signature: SR.

Rodilla used seven thousand sacks of cement, seventy-five thousand seashells, and truckloads of bottles from dumps.

"I once walk from Santa Monica to Long Beach on Sunday, look for seashells," Rodilla confided. No mean fact, especially with a load on his back: the walk is twenty miles.

During the thirty-three years of construction, he worked eight hours a day as a tile setter, spent another eight hours on his towers and slept the remaining eight hours. He had no time for vices and didn't believe in luxuries. When he left his towers, his neighbors found beside his beloved encyclopedia a supply of crackers and canned food.

He left in 1954, unknown, scorned by his neighbors who thought he was "cracked in the head." He settled in Martinez in Northern California, where he died in 1966, never once returning to Watts.

But his towers reached national prominence in 1959, when the city of Los Angeles, feeling the structures unsafe, ordered them razed. Overnight the towers became a cause célèbre. Hundreds of prominent art voices on three continents joined in the debate, furiously denouncing a bureaucracy bent on the destruction of a work of art.

The city finally agreed to a compromise. They ruled that the fate of the towers would depend on a pull test. The tallest

*Continued on page 63*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

# The Court-Martial of Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper

*A portrait of Henry O. Flipper at West Point, where he began his military career.*

## *An Example of Black-White Relationships*

An aura of anxiety tinged with curiosity and prejudice gripped the tiny West Texas courtroom as a decision neared in one of the strangest trials in American military history. Throughout four exhausting weeks of examination and cross-examination, the accused officer maintained a remarkably "independent and indifferent air" betraying neither anger, fear, nor uncertainty. Now, at the conclusion of the twenty-ninth day of testimony, the young lieutenant rose slowly from his seat and walked with calm deliberation from the room. He awaited a verdict that might signal the end of a once promising military career.

Anyone who witnessed the scene must have been impressed by the blue-clad figure that emerged from the makeshift courtroom at Fort Davis, Texas, that seventh day of December 1881. At a height of nearly six feet two inches and weighing over one hundred and ninety pounds, the twenty-five year-old cavalry officer appeared, with but a single all-important exception, the epitome of the *beau sabreur*. And that solitary deviation from the romantic ideal of the gallant warrior transformed an almost unnoticed incident in the tedious annals of military justice into a momentary cause célèbre and an event of enduring social and historical significance.

As the first black graduate of the United States Military Academy and the only officer of his race in the United States Army, Henry Ossian Flipper fully realized that his entire career had been a curious form of trial. From the moment in May of 1873 when he stepped from the cabin of his ex-slave parents in Thomasville, Georgia, his life embodied a bitter anomaly. As an object of curiosity, young Flipper found himself suddenly poised uncomfortably in the penetrating spotlight of national attention. The northern press delighted in lauding him as an example to be emulated by others of his race, while racist editors of his native South adopted him as a convenient butt for scorn and ridicule. But despite the often hostile interest focused upon his every action and complete social ostracism meted out by his caste-conscious class-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

*Captain Merritt Barber, who acted as Flipper's defense counsel without any compensation.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

*Colonel William R. Shafter (in 1898), post commander at Fort Davis and a principal prosecution witness.*

# *in the Army, 1881*

by Bruce J. Dinges

mates, Henry O. Flipper surmounted the barriers of prejudice and loneliness to graduate, fiftieth in a class of seventy-six, on June 15, 1877. A month later he accepted a commission as a second lieutenant assigned to Company A of the Tenth United States Cavalry.

Arriving in Houston, Texas, to join his regiment en route to Fort Sill, Lieutenant Flipper discovered that the success of his struggle at West Point carried no assurance of acceptance in a white man's world. While curious Texans generally displayed proper and formal courtesy, the inexperienced lieutenant found the doors of white homes rigidly barred, presumably ensuring the sanctity of southern womanhood. Armed, however, with a firm conviction that "uprightness and intelligence" must eventually expose the absurdity of racial prejudice, Flipper departed for the Indian Territory determined to win the confidence of the officers and men of his regiment.

Such a task proved exceedingly difficult; but by the spring of 1880, when Company A entered Fort Davis, Texas, he had demonstrated an unusual degree of military ability and earned the respect of both his superiors and the enlisted men of his troop. His performance in the Victorio War drew the praise of Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, commanding the Tenth Cavalry, and of his company commander, Captain Nicholas Nolan. For services in the field, the black lieutenant assumed the duties of acting assistant quartermaster, post quartermaster, and acting commissary of subsistence. A bright and fruitful military career seemed assured.

ANY ILLUSIONS that Flipper entertained of an idyllic future in the army rapidly vanished. Clouds appeared on the horizon almost immediately upon his return from the field. (Trouble arose from his close friendship with Miss Mollie Dwyer, the young sister of Captain Nolan's bride, whom he first knew at Fort Sill and continued to ride with at Fort

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

*Brigadier General Christopher C. Augur, commander of the army's Department of Texas.*

Davis.) Bitter resentment first emanated from Lieutenant Charles Nordstrom, whom Flipper described as an uneducated brute. Soon the black officer noted a marked coolness among others at the post and began to regard his fellow officers, with few exceptions, as little more than "hyenas." This unenviable situation further deteriorated in March of 1881 when Colonel William R. Shafter relieved Major N. B. McLaughlin as post commander. Accompanying him as adjutant was First Lieutenant Louis Wilhelmi.

A distinguished veteran of the Civil War, "Pecos Bill" Shafter readily accepted postwar command of Negro troops on the remote and barren Texas frontier. Despite a character described as "coarse, profane [and] afflicted with a barely concealed racism," Shafter proved himself an effective leader of black soldiers, while also gaining a reputation for impulsiveness and harassment of any subordinate unfortunate enough to fall into disfavor. The colonel's controversial behavior and unorthodox disciplinary procedures ultimately tarnished his military reputation among his peers during the Spanish-American War.

Lieutenant Wilhelmi, a Prussian appointed to West Point in 1872, first met Henry Flipper at the academy. His scholastic career proved a failure, and ill health forced his resignation in December 1873. After a brief career as an insurance adjuster in Philadelphia, he secured a commission in the regular army in October 1875.

With the arrival of Shafter and Wilhelmi, the stage was set for what was to become the final act in the military career of Henry O. Flipper. Colonel Shafter immediately removed his black subordinate from duty as acting assistant quartermaster and ordered the transfer of commissary funds from the quartermaster's safe to Flipper's quarters. He also informed the young officer that he would be relieved as acting commissary of subsistence as soon as a replacement could be found. This action, Flipper later maintained, signaled the beginning of a systematic campaign of persecution.

Unfortunately, no concrete evidence exists substantiating —or disproving—the black officer's conviction that Shafter, Wilhelmi, and Nordstrom conspired to destroy his military career. But as events during the summer of 1881 unfolded, disconcerting questions arose concerning Shafter's concept of command responsibility and the motives underlying the actions of Lieutenant Wilhelmi—a man apparently adept at exploiting his colonel's weaknesses.

DESPITE Shafter's intention to relieve Lieutenant Flipper of his duties as acting commissary, five months passed until circumstances compelled the colonel to act. During this period the lieutenant continued to perform the duties of his post. In response to Shafter's orders, he removed the commissary funds from the quartermaster's safe and placed them in his private quarters. The post commander also suggested, Flipper later maintained, that funds be deposited in the San Antonio National Bank, where the commissary officer could draw against them when necessary. Since the lieutenant anticipated relinquishing his post at any moment, he ignored Shafter's advice. But it was not forgotten.

Financial complexities increased on May 2, when Major M. P. Small, chief commissary of subsistence for the Department of Texas, notified all acting commissaries of his absence from headquarters for the remainder of the month and ordered the cessation of cash transmittals until June. Apparently interpreting this directive as applying to everything pertaining to commissary funds, Lieutenant Flipper also stopped forwarding weekly statements, pending further orders from the chief commissary. But, since Major Small remained absent from the early part of May to the last of June and again from July 4 to July 24, Lieutenant Flipper received no further communication from department headquarters until the arrival of a telegram on August requesting the transfer of all funds for the past fiscal year. Small, also noting that no weekly statements for the present fiscal year had as yet been received from Fort Davis, ordered the prompt transmission of receipts in the future.

By this time Flipper realized that something was strangely amiss, for on July 8, Colonel Shafter had ordered him to

transfer all commissary funds in his possession to Major Small as soon as possible. In preparing for an inspection of his returns, Flipper apparently discovered a deficiency of $1,440.43. Although puzzled, he experienced no undue alarm as he expected he could easily submit a check for the amount of the deficit and then deposit personal funds in the San Antonio bank to cover it.

Unexpected complications soon developed. Unable to raise the required cash in the time allotted, the black officer procrastinated, hoping Homer Lee & Co., publishers of an autobiography he had written while stationed at Fort Sill, would forward royalties due him. Thus, aware that Major Small would not reach San Antonio until the end of July, Lieutenant Flipper relied upon Colonel Shafter to cast no more than a cursory glance at the invoices submitted for his signature and made entries in the weekly accounts reporting the funds "in transit." He was confident that the deficit could be covered within a matter of days.

Apparently this strategem succeeded, and Shafter remained ignorant of his subordinate's difficulty until August 10, when Major Small informed him that no funds had arrived in San Antonio. Although the thought of deliberate misappropriation allegedly never occurred to him, the colonel reacted immediately. Recalling a glimpse of saddlebags attached to the lieutenant's horse and fearing his escape to Mexico, Shafter dispatched Lieutenant Wilhelmi with orders to return Flipper to the post.

When the young black officer reached Shafter's office, he maintained that the commissary funds were mailed on July 9. If they had not been received he could offer no explanation other than that they must have been lost in transit. Unsatisfied, the colonel ordered the lieutenant to turn over the funds in his possession to Lieutenant F. H. Edmunds, who was to assume the duties of acting commissary of subsistence.

An investigation followed. On the morning of August 13, Colonel Shafter notified Lieutenant Flipper that his quarters would be searched; he would, in effect, be assumed guilty of misappropriation and treated ". . . just as though I knew you had stolen those checks." The lieutenant, presumably confident that all the money entrusted to him, with the exception of the amount covered by the $1,440.43 check, rested securely in his trunk, acquiesced to the search and even assisted lieutenants Wilhelmi and Edmunds in their efforts so as to make it as thorough as possible.

Upon entering Flipper's rooms, the officers discovered commissary checks in excess of $2,000 thrown haphazardly on a desk. In addition, weekly statements of funds for May, June, and July 1881 were uncovered in a trunk containing the lieutenant's clothing as well as articles belonging to his servant, Lucy Smith. Since the adjutant neglected to make an accurate inventory of the items removed at the time of the search, the exact amount of the funds impounded on August 13 was never verified, although Wilhelmi maintained that a discrepancy of approximately $2,070 existed between

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*Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, who praised Flipper for his performance in the Victorio War.*

the amount listed in the weekly statements for the fiscal year 1880–81 and checks found in Flipper's possession. Armed with the evidence, the adjutant immediately detailed an armed guard to place the black officer under close arrest and confiscated all valuables, including his West Point class ring.

INFORMED OF THE RESULTS of the search, Colonel Shafter summoned Lucy Smith and ordered her stripped. He removed $2,800 in checks from her person, among which was the non-negotiable check drawn on the San Antonio National Bank. The frightened servant resolutely maintained that her employer had repeatedly cautioned her to take care that none of the papers in his quarters be disturbed, as he would hold her responsible. Lucy explained that when another woman was assigned to clean the lieutenant's rooms, she had placed the checks in her bosom and in her haste had neglected to remove them.

Doubting the veracity of the statements of both Flipper and his servant, and determined that the missing funds be repaid as soon as possible, Shafter reacted with characteristic impulsiveness and severity. On August 15 he obtained an order from the U. S. district commissioner for the arrest of

Lucy Smith, charging her with the theft of $1,300. Authorities confined her in the Presidio County Jail. As for Lieutenant Flipper, by the evening of August 13 he was lodged in a windowless 6½ x 4½-foot cell in the post guardhouse. No visitors were allowed without the consent of the commanding officer. Such harsh treatment, unprecedented in view of the alleged offense, evoked a sharp response from department headquarters. Shafter was directed to confine the lieutenant "somewhere other than the guardhouse." Nor did the colonel's peremptory order escape the attention of the commanding general of the army. When informed of Flipper's plight, General William T. Sherman noted that "his confinement to the Guard House though within the province of the post commander is not usual unless there be reasons to apprehend an escape." Consequently, on the evening of August 17 Shafter ordered Lieutenant Flipper released and "placed in arrest in quarters and a sentinel over him."

However, during Flipper's confinement, Colonel Shafter did not relent in his efforts to fathom the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the commissary funds and to make good the shortage. A telegram from the cashier of the San Antonio National Bank showed no cash in Flipper's name. The lieutenant admitted the worthlessness of the $1,440.43 check but explained: "I had to deceive in some way, and I took that way to do it." Shafter cautioned him not to incriminate himself but added that he would like to know the whereabouts of the missing money. Flipper replied that he could not explain the loss unless the commissary funds had been stolen from him. If such were the case, he refused to accuse any particular person. The young officer remained confident, however, that he could readily cover the deficit if allowed to speak to friends.

Shafter acceded to the request and allowed Flipper several visitors. W. S. Chamberlain, a watchmaker at the post, asked Shafter "if it would do Lieutenant Flipper any good to raise this money." The colonel replied, "Yes, it will save him from the penitentiary," and offered a personal contribution of one hundred dollars. Shafter also informed the watchmaker that "he always thought Lieut [enant] Flipper to be an honest man, and did not believe that he was guilty." In his opinion, there was "someone else . . . some damned nigger at the bottom of it."

Apparently convinced of the young officer's innocence, the populace in the vicinity of Fort Davis promptly came to his assistance. A general collection yielded $1,700 in a single day, and by August 17, the day of Flipper's release from the post guardhouse, the entire deficit of $3,797.77 had been covered. The post adjutant, however, retained possession of the lieutenant's personal effects, and Colonel Shafter insisted upon holding Flipper's watch as collateral for his one hundred dollar "loan."

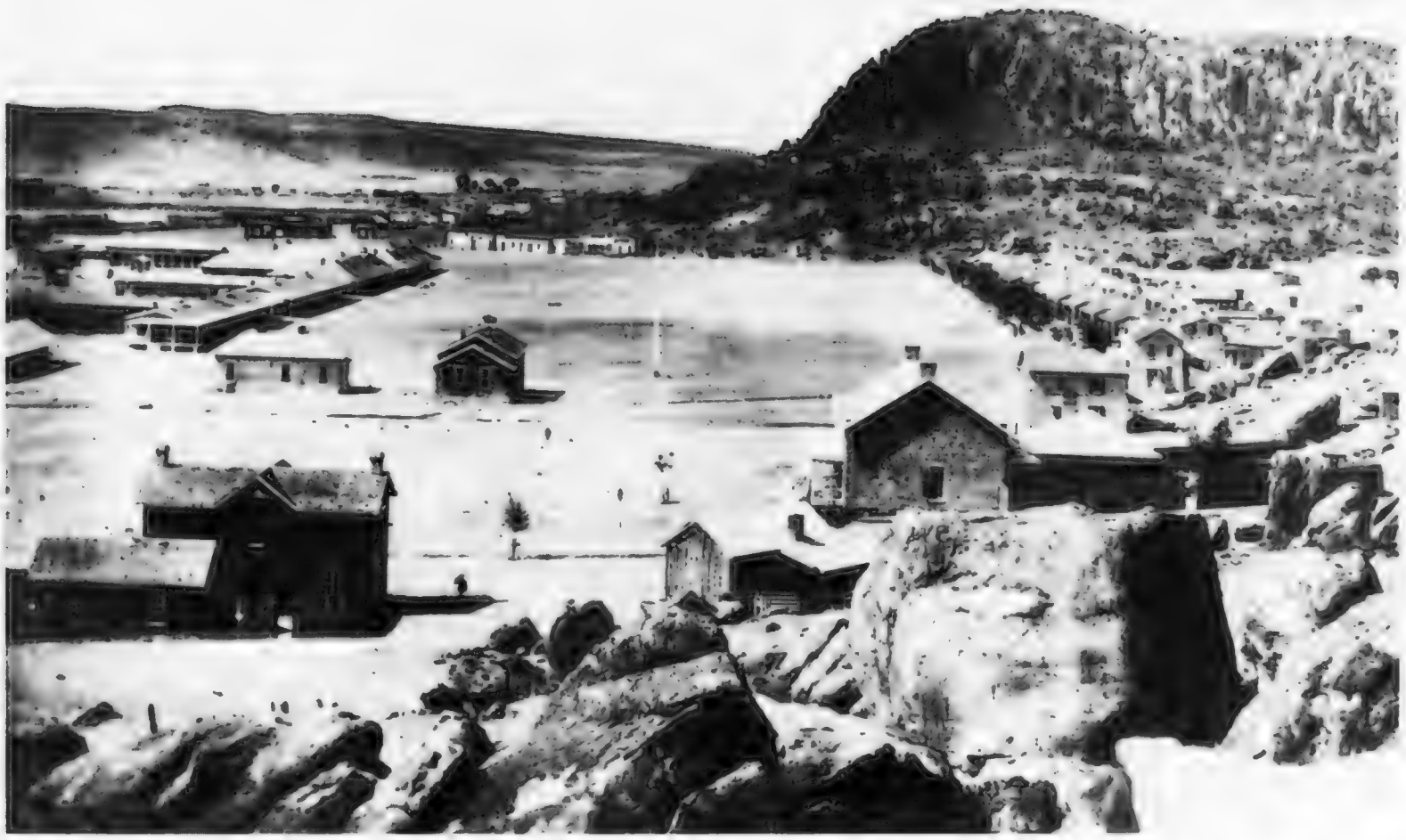
In spite of full restitution of the missing funds, November 4, 1881, saw Second Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper arraigned on charges of embezzling $3,797.77 between July 8 and August 13 of that year and of "conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman." In the list of specifications attached to the second charge, the prosecution alleged that the lieutenant lied to the post commander on July 9, 16, and 23 in falsely reporting the transmittal of the funds in question to the chief commissary of the Department of Texas. Furthermore, he had presented a fraudulent check for $1,440.43 on July 2, 1881, and made additional false statements on August 10, 1881, concerning the transmission of funds to the chief commissary. To all charges and specifications, Lieutenant Flipper entered pleas of "not guilty."

THE COURT-MARTIAL of Henry Ossian Flipper convened inauspiciously on September 17 with the lieutenant's acceptance of a board composed of ten members. Three of these officers were currently serving with the First Infantry, of which Shafter was colonel. Galusha Pennypacker, the thirty-eight-year-old colonel of the Sixteenth Infantry, presided over the court. Commissioned a captain at the age of seventeen, Pennypacker eventually earned a Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry in the Civil War and was the only general officer in the Union Army too young to vote in the election of 1864.

Brigadier General Christopher C. Augur, commander of the Department of Texas, detailed Captain John W. Clous as judge advocate even though the captain was also at that time serving as acting judge advocate of the department. Clous's duties, therefore, included not only prosecution but selection of the officers serving on the court-martial board, review of the proceedings at the conclusion of the trial, and recommendation of the verdict and sentence.

On September 19, Lieutenant Flipper requested, and was granted, a delay until November 1 to provide necessary time to contact friends in the East in an attempt to raise funds to defray the expense of an adequate defense, obtain counsel, and summon and interview witnesses. These privileges had in effect been denied the accused as notification of the trial date failed to reach him until five days before the convening of the court.

Even with the temporary respite, the lieutenant's prospects remained bleak. Letters to leading Negroes in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D. C., failed to produce the desperately needed cash; and no civilian lawyer appeared anxious to accept the case for less than $1,000. "Chagrined . . . depressed [and] helpless," Flipper resigned himself to fight yet another battle in his life alone. To his utter amazement, however, an offer of legal assistance arrived bearing the signature of Captain Merritt Barber of the Sixteenth Infantry. Since army regulations specified that no officer could receive payment for defending another officer, the impoverished and virtually friendless lieutenant gratefully accepted the captain's aid. Throughout the course of the trial, the black officer and his white defender shared quarters,



*The site of Lieutenant Flipper's supposed embezzlement and the court-martial: Fort Davis, Texas. The court proceedings took place in the building to the left of the flag staff.*

forming a friendship cemented in deep mutual respect and confidence that transcended the barrier of color.

The case for the prosecution appears to have been severely handicapped from the outset by the judge advocate's inability to prove that Flipper had at any time secreted or disposed of the missing commissary funds. Only Lieutenant Wilhelmi seemed confident that the black officer had consciously defrauded the government. Captain Clous did present incontrovertible evidence that the young lieutenant's carelessness and inexperience in handling his personal financial affairs left him chronically in debt. But the defense effectively responded with a stream of witnesses, ranging from colonels Shafter and Grierson to the leading civilians in and around Fort Davis, praising Flipper's exemplary character.

Moreover, the testimony of the principal prosecution witnesses, Colonel Shafter and Lieutenant Wilhelmi, did little to facilitate the judge advocate's task. Although preferring the charges leading to the court-martial proceedings, Shafter was forced to admit, as late as November 8, that he did "not yet know where that money went to." The colonel also offered abundant evidence of a faulty memory and of extreme laxity in the supervision of post affairs. He reported that he had personally counted the commissary funds and that his signature appeared on every weekly report. Yet the statements for June 1881 bore no evidence of the commanding officer's verification.

Furthermore, Shafter could not recall whether he examined the papers removed from Flipper's quarters. When asked to identify them, he refused, stating: "I have only the word of the officer who took them that they are the articles that came from Flipper's quarters." Nor did he remember his order that Lucy Smith be stripped, the contents of his affidavit before the U. S. commissioner, or indeed, whether he had testified at all. Finally, recognizing the inadequacy of the prepared memorandum from which he was testifying, the colonel concluded with a statement that, while he might not remember trifling events, he was certain of the important items pertaining to the command of the post.

Lieutenant Wilhelmi's recollections proved almost as worthless to the prosecution. Early in the trial, the adjutant set the tone of his testimony when he averred that his relations with

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# Invitation to Washington —A Bid for Peace

*And, as part of the artful maneuver, Charles Bird King is commissioned to paint the guests' portraits*

by Herman J. Viola

Each year, as generations of curious Americans have done before them, thousands of visitors file through the rooms and hallways of the White House. Few leave without a renewed feeling for the dignity of America's cultural heritage—a feeling enhanced by five striking Indian portraits that hang in the ground-floor library. Ironically, one hundred and fifty years ago these Indians were also White House visitors, gaping in wonderment and fascination at all they saw. They were no ordinary tourists. As representatives of remote and militant Indian tribes, they were there as objects of an elaborate scheme designed to influence them to accept peaceably American expansion into their country.

Too weak to risk war with the powerful tribes arrayed along its western borders, the federal government until well into the nineteenth century stressed diplomacy rather than force in its Indian policy. Inviting Indian leaders to visit America's most important cities, especially Washington, D.C., was a major component of this policy. After inspecting forts, arsenals, and battleships, being showered with presents, and meeting their Great Father the president, few of the impressionable natives returned to their people without profound respect for the wealth and strength of the United States. The Indians whose portraits now hang in the White House library were no exceptions when, in the fall of 1821, they were brought to Washington by their agent Benjamin O'Fallon.

Two years earlier, O'Fallon had been given the task of preparing the Indians of the Upper Missouri region for the arrival of the Americans. Fearful of England's intentions in the Northwest following the War of 1812, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun had conceived a master plan intended to overawe the tribes and cut off their intercourse with British traders operating from Canada. A military post was to be established on the Missouri River at its confluence with the Yellowstone, and another at the mouth of the Minnesota on the Mississippi, thereby securing the vast area of the two river valleys for American interests. As Calhoun explained in the letter appointing O'Fallon agent, "The important military movements which are contemplated on the Missouri will be greatly facilitated or impeded by the friendship or hostilities of the Indians. Their disposition will be principally influenced by the conduct of the agent, and you will accordingly spare no pains to acquire their friendship and confidence."



***Choncape, or Big Kansas, of the Oto tribe was among the Indians who visited the capital and posed for portraits by Charles Bird King.***

DANISH NATIONAL MUSEUM

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

*Many believe this painting by King—the only Indian group he depicted— to be his finest work. From left to right are Young Omawhaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri, and two Pawnees.*

Calhoun assured O'Fallon that "these important objects" could be accomplished by a proper combination of kindness, firmness, and "a judicious distribution of presents." The devastating depression of 1819 and a cost-conscious Congress shattered Calhoun's plans for western expansion, leaving Fort Atkinson and the Upper Missouri Indian Agency, established at Council Bluffs, the exposed vanguards of the United States.

O'FALLON HAD BEEN a good choice for the difficult post. Although only twenty-six, he had already seen many years' service as a fur trader and Indian agent, working for his uncle William Clark, the superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, who had raised him from infancy. Because of his long association with Clark, O'Fallon was remarkably well-schooled in the customs, habits, and character of the Indians of the Upper Missouri.

Young O'Fallon was responsible for a vaguely defined region occupied by roving bands of some fourteen tribes, including the Assiniboin, Blackfeet, Crow, Kansa, Missouri, Omaha, Oto, Pawnee, Ponca, and Sioux. The obvious inadequacy of the American military presence along the Missouri River, however, had emboldened the Indians and weakened the chance of attaching them to the United States. Furthermore, American traders and trappers were swarming into the

region, arousing fear and anger among the tribes. O'Fallon was sitting on a powder keg.

Hoping to forestall hostilities, he requested permission to bring to Washington a delegation of about fifteen chiefs and warriors from the more militant tribes. "I think it of the highest importance," he wrote, "that a few of those [Indians] should visit the President together with some of the most populous States and Citys to enable them to see the wealth and Population which they cannot be induced to believe is equal to what they have seen in Canada." The troops at Fort Atkinson had inspired respect "and our boats additional astonishment," but the Indians were "still disposed to underrate our strength, to believe the detachment of troops on the Missouri is not a part, but the whole of our Army." Calhoun liked the suggestion but asked him to delay another year before bringing the delegation.

But O'Fallon could not wait. Shortly after making his request in April 1821, he learned that a Pawnee war party had attacked nine Americans near the Arkansas River, killing several. The raiders had escaped with about a thousand dollars worth of plunder—trade goods, guns, and ammunition—and two American flags, which they had flagrantly displayed at their village. O'Fallon suggested sending a four-hundred-man military expedition after the culprits. Calhoun agreed that such temerity could not be ignored but thought it more prudent and economical to invite tribal leaders to Washington, where they could be cautioned about their reckless behavior.

Anticipating a lively winter in the East after two years at his wilderness outpost, the handsome bachelor acted quickly. He sent runners to the tribes near Council Bluffs, inviting the chiefs and warriors to visit their Great Father in Washington; in less than a month he was traveling east, accompanied by his black body servant, two interpreters, and seventeen Kansa, Missouri, Omaha, Oto, and Pawnee Indians.

The proud, warlike Pawnee, led by Sharitarish, brother of head chief Tarecawawaho, dominated the delegation. Confident in the belief that the president of the United States could not have as many wives and warriors as he had, Tarecawawaho refused to humble himself by visiting the Great Father; but he had no objection to sending thirty-year-old Sharitarish as his representative. Accompanying him were Peskelechaco, of the Republican Pawnee, and Petalesharro, chief of the Pawnee Loups. Tall, handsome, only twenty-four, his bravery attested to by his full war bonnet of eagle feathers, Petalesharro four years earlier had saved a captive Comanche woman from being burned at the stake. Opposed to human sacrifice, he had rushed from the crowd, cut the woman free, thrown her across a horse, and carried her from the Pawnee village.

Less militant though no less colorful were the other delegates. Leading the Omaha deputation was Ongpatonga or Big Elk, their principal chief. This distinguished orator was about forty and considered the most talented and influential member of his tribe. Ably representing the Oto were Choncape, or Big Kansas, and Shaumonekusse, who was accompanied by his young wife Eagle of Delight. The principal Kansa delegate was Monchonsia, or White Plume.

Supervising this diverse and temperamental group challenged O'Fallon's abilities. The Missouri, Omaha, and Oto were peaceful and amicable, "deserving the friendship and confidence of the American people," but the agent considered the Kansa "impudent" and the Pawnee "insolent." The troublesome Kansa were at war with most of their neighbors, creating additional tensions within the delegation. Communication was also a major problem. The delegates represented two language groups, and none of them spoke English. Consequently interpreters had to translate all instructions and messages twice. No matter; O'Fallon considered himself capable of coping with any situation. Arrogant, quick-tempered, and fast with his fists, he scorned agents who handled their Indians in a "tame and humbled maner [*sic*]," believing they disgraced both "themselves and [the] government in the eye of the Savage." In his opinion, an Indian agent had to be a man "of the most daring, persevering, and enterprising caracter [*sic*]."

THE DELEGATION'S immediate destination was St. Louis. With the Indians quartered under his uncle's care at the superintendency, O'Fallon prepared for the rigorous nine hundred miles ahead. He reshod the horses and mules, and purchased draft horses, a harness, two dearborn wagons, and such incidentals as nine pounds of tobacco, three pounds of vermilion, and six pairs of stirrups. He also added two men to the company: James Graves, a black hired on as cook for the Indians until they reached Washington; and Louis T. Honore, his uncle's interpreter and secretary whom Clark may have sent along to keep a protective eye on his hard-drinking, hot-tempered young nephew. Regardless, Honore served O'Fallon well, handling all business matters and attending to the delegates. While O'Fallon kept busy elsewhere, the Indians evidently amused themselves by eating, for they consumed some four hundred and fifty pounds of beef in twelve days.

On the morning of October 19, the colorful cavalcade resumed its trek. Riding in the lead was the confident O'Fallon, reins in one hand, his ever present cigar in the other. Strung out behind him in full regalia were the somber, apprehensive Indians. Lumbering along in the rear were the wagons, driven by the two blacks and piled high with provisions, bedding, and gifts for the president.

Sleeping at inns where possible, camping along the road, the Indians traveled for six weeks by way of Louisville, Wheeling, and Hagerstown. On November 30, the *Daily National Intelligencer* announced the delegation's triumphant arrival in Washington. "Their object is to visit their Great Father, and learn something of that civilization of which they have hitherto remained in total ignorance," the paper

reported. Representing the "most remote tribes with which we have intercourse," the delegates were thought to be "the first of those tribes that have ever been in the midst of our settlements."

Surprisingly, O'Fallon did not board with his charges in the capital. Perhaps he had seen enough of them during the preceding three months. The first four days he and his body servant stayed at the Indian Queen, Washington's most popular hotel, advertising sixty "well-proportioned and well-furnished" rooms; then he moved to an equally fine inn owned by Joshua Tennison on Pennsylvania Avenue. The Indians and interpreters, however, he lodged a block away at George Miller's tavern, a notorious establishment where slave dealers reputedly housed their property while traveling through Washington. Apparently Miller's price was right. He charged O'Fallon only seventy-five cents a day for each delegate's room and board, half the amount the agent paid at the Indian Queen and Tennison's. The travel-weary delegation rested a week, and then all but two Indians and an interpreter left for a tour of Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia, returning to Washington two days after Christmas.

For the next few days, the bewildered visitors were set upon by tailors, cobblers, and merchants who measured them for hats, shirts, trousers, and boots. The men received military uniforms—blue greatcoats with red cuffs and capes and silver epaulettes, blue trousers, and black leather boots. The hats resembled a coronet decorated with red and blue foil and brightly colored feathers. Silver arm bands, tomahawks, sheath knives, and powder horns completed the ensembles. Eagle of Delight was given scarlet pantaloons and a green cambric cloak. The Indians were evidently pleased with the clothes because Shaumonekusse more than twenty years later was still proudly wearing his greatcoat, which, an observer noted, was "adorned with red facings and enormously large brass buttons, and garnished upon each shoulder with a pair of tarnished, sickly-looking silver epaulettes."

THE INDIANS wore their new finery when they formally met President James Monroe at the White House on February 4, 1822. Followed by O'Fallon and the interpreters, they were ushered into the president's antechamber (now the Red Room) where they nervously awaited his arrival. They were not completely at ease in their strange clothes. "Their coats seemed to pinch them about the shoulders," one bystander noticed; "now and then they would take off their uneasy headdresses, and one sought a temporary relief by pulling off his boots." Monroe's entrance brought the assembly to attention.

Speaking from prepared notes held in one hand, the president addressed the delegates, thanking them for coming such a great distance to see him and the wonders of the white man's world. Now, he hoped the Indians would want the comforts of civilized life for themselves. If so, he was prepared to send missionaries to teach their people agriculture and Christianity. The president was also pleased that the Indians had visited forts, arsenals, and navy yards, but, he warned, they had seen only a fraction of American strength. Few fighting men were needed at the capital; in time of war all citizens took up arms and became warriors. Thus, he urged the Indians to remain at peace with each other and not to listen to those who advised them to mistrust or fight with the United States. As Monroe spoke, the interpreters translated his speech sentence by sentence; the Indians in return nodded gravely, indicating that they understood what had been said.

When the president finished, the delegates were invited to respond. Sharitarish stepped forward, solemnly shook hands with Monroe, and slowly delivered a long speech. "My Great Father," he said, "I have traveled a great distance to see you —I have seen you and my heart rejoices. I have heard your words . . . and I will carry them to my people as pure as they came from your month. . . . [I] have seen your people, your homes, your vessels on the big lake, and a great many wonderful things far beyond my comprehension, which appears to have been made by the Great Spirit and placed in your hands." But, wonderful as it was, he would not trade his way of life for that of the white man. There were still plenty of buffalo to hunt and beaver to trap. "It is too soon," Sharitarish continued, "to send those good men [the missionaries] among us—we are not starving yet—we wish you to permit us to enjoy the chase until the game of our country is exhausted—until the wild animals become extinct. . . . I have grown up, and lived this long without work," he declared; "I am in hopes you will suffer me to die without it. We have everything we want—we have plenty of land, if you will keep your people off it."

The other chiefs then spoke in turn, each stressing his love for the Indian way of life. The first speakers were noticeably nervous, but each succeeding orator became less reserved until the last—claimed a witness—spoke "as loud as you ever heard a lawyer at a county court bar."

As each speaker finished, he laid a present at the president's feet. By the end of the ceremony, Monroe was sitting behind a mound of buffalo robes, calumets, moccasins, and feathered headdresses. Sharitarish explained that the Indians knew the gifts would be of little value to him, but they wanted Monroe "to have them deposited and preserved in some conspicuous part of your lodge, so that when we are gone . . . if our children should visit this place, as we do now, they may see and recognize with pleasure the deposits of their fathers, and reflect on the times that are past." What became of the gifts is unknown; only the chiefs' portraits remain.

By the end of the lengthy ceremony, the audience had been swelled considerably by curious onlookers, including several Supreme Court justices who were waiting to see Monroe. Everyone adjourned to the drawing room (today's Blue Room) for cake and wine. The Indians capped the festivities by

*Eagle of Delight, wife of Shaumonekusse. This and the following four paintings are on display in the White House.*

*Sharitarish, brother of head chief Tarecawawaho, represented the Pawnee people.*

*Petalesharro, chief of the Pawnee Loups and foe of the practice of human sacrifice.*

*Monchousia, or White Plume, the principal Kansa delegate.*

*Shaumonekusse, representative of the Oto people.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

*Agent O'Fallon housed the Indians and their interpreters in George Miller's tavern, at a cost of only seventy-five cents a day per person for room and board.*

lighting their pipes and passing them to the president, Chief Justice John Marshall, and other dignitaries, who took token whiffs. By this time the visitors had endured long enough their unfamiliar and uncomfortable clothing. As a dismayed observer reported, "one of them, unable longer to bear the pressure of his boots, sat down and deliberately pulled them off. Another his coat, until the whole might have brought themselves back to a comfortable state of nature had they not been led out."

The Indians met the president on two other occasions. A month earlier, New Year's Day, 1822, they had been part of the crush at the annual White House reception. While the Marine Band played a medley of patriotic airs, cabinet officials, members of the diplomatic corps and Congress, and military officers chatted amiably with each other as they elbowed their way to the punch bowls. Shortly before the afternoon reception was to end, the Indians stalked into the East Room and stole the show from the fashionably dressed ladies of Washington. The Indians were arrayed in their finest ceremonial garb; three were wrapped in brightly painted buffalo robes, including Petalesharro who was also wearing his war bonnet with feathers "descending like wings to the waist." Bright vermilion made their faces even more awesome. To Jonathan Elliot, editor of the Washington *Gazette*, they looked "cadaverous" until the "music and the hilarity of the scene" put them at ease; then "in place of pensive gravity, a heartfelt joy beamed in the sullen eye of the Indian warrior."

Their last meeting with President Monroe was on Saturday, February 9, when they danced for him on the enclosure just north of the White House. Well-publicized by the local press and favored with a crisp, sunny day, the spectacle attracted half the population of Washington, including many ladies

*Big Elk, or Ongpatonga, considered the most talented and influential of the Omaha Indians.*

and most of the congressmen who had adjourned early for the occasion. The mock council between the Indians and the presidential party which opened the show afforded "a striking specimen of native oratory," in one bystander's opinion. "The gestures of the Indian speakers were violent, but energetic, and frequently graceful." When the conference ended, the warriors threw aside their blankets and, armed with tomahawks and clubs, performed dances described as "a rude kind of leaping, governed, in some measure, by the sullen sound of a sort of drum." Wearing nothing but war paint and red flannel breechclouts, the Indians "uttered shocking yells, and writhed and twisted their bodies in frightful contortion." The three-hour theatrical was a tremendous success. "They were painted horribly, and exhibited the operation of scalping and tomahawking in fine style," a second observer claimed. Still another thought the exhibition one which "no person of liberal and philosophical curiosity would willingly have missed seeing, and which no one who viewed it . . . would choose to witness again."

The Indians so impressed Washingtonians with their dignified and orderly behavior that many of the delegates were invited to private homes for tea or to spend an evening by the fireside. Shaumonekusse and his wife were frequent guests of Jonathan Barber, a local physician. "She was a very good natured, mild woman," he wrote, whereas her husband "shewed great readiness in acquiring our language, retaining anything that he was once informed, and imitating the tones of every word." The Indians also demonstrated a natural wit. On one occasion the doctor showed several of them a skeleton he kept in a closet, whereupon one of them grasped a bony hand and said, "How do you do?"

The most popular delegate was Petalesharro, whose dramatic rescue of the captive woman fired the imaginations of romantic easterners. The girls of Miss White's Seminary immortalized the deed by having an elaborate silver medal engraved for him. The front shows Petalesharro and the woman rushing toward two horses; the reverse shows several disappointed Indians looking at the empty scaffold. The inscription reads: TO THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVES. The girls presented the medal at a private home in a ceremony witnessed by the entire delegation. Touched by the gesture, Petalesharro clutched the medal and said: "I am glad that my brothers and sisters have heard of the good act that I have done. My brothers and sisters think that I did it in ignorance, but I now know what I have done."

Perhaps the best indication of the delegation's popularity was the requests from prominent artists for the Indians to sit for portraits. The celebrated John Neagle painted Sharitarish, Choncape, and Petalesharro when the delegation visited Philadelphia. Samuel F. B. Morse, better known for his inventive genius, included Petalesharro's portrait in his monumental "The Old House of Representatives," which he painted in Washington in 1822. Since Morse hoped to stabilize his shaky financial resources by taking this painting on tour and charging admission, he obviously tried to capitalize on Petalesharro's popularity by placing him in the House gallery watching the preparations for an evening session. Interestingly the solitary Indian, identified only as "Pawnee Chief" in Morse's key to the painting, closely resembles the portrait of Petalesharro by Charles Bird King.

King, a fine artist who included among his patrons such eminent statesmen as Calhoun, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, and Henry Clay, is probably best remembered for his many Indian portraits. His first were of the Indians with O'Fallon. King painted them at the urging of Thomas L. McKenney, superintendent of Indian trade, who wanted the portraits for the American Indian archives he had established in his Georgetown office. The Indians were so pleased with their likenesses that they asked for personal copies. Altogether, King received three hundred dollars from the federal government for twenty-five portraits of the O'Fallon delegation. Seventeen went with the Indians, eight went to McKenney's archives and were burned in the Smithsonian Institution fire of 1865. The artist, however, made a number of copies for his own use, including the portraits of Petalesharro, Sharitarish, Eagle of Delight, Shaumonekusse, and Monchonsia, which were presented to the White House in 1962 by the employees of Sears Roebuck and Company.

The delegation remained in Washington until the end of February; the King portraits evidently were the last order of business. For the return trip the party used commercial transportation; O'Fallon had auctioned away the horses and wagons shortly after the Indians returned from their eastern tour. From Washington the delegates traveled by stagecoach to Wheeling, where the agent bought a flatboat that carried them to Louisville. There they booked steamboat passage—appropriately on the *Calhoun*—to St. Louis, arriving April 5. O'Fallon reported they were "all in fine health and spirits, and most favorably impressed with the strength, wealth, and magnanimity of our Nation"—an impression enforced by the seventeen hundred pounds of presents they brought home.

When the Indians reached their respective villages, they found that they had long since been given up for dead, and their unexpected arrival touched off widespread rejoicing. O'Fallon, however, had little cause for celebrating. The agent had lost a horse and his "most faithful and valuable servant," who had drowned while swimming across the swollen west fork of the Grand River. Furthermore, he claimed to be suffering "worse from fatigue and exposure than I had ever experienced before."

Although the delegation's visit cost the federal government $6,085, it was considered money well spent, as this editorial from the Washington *Gazette* indicates: "The object of their interesting mission, we believe, has been fully accomplished: these aborigines are deeply impressed with the power of the *long-knives*, that for the future the *tomahawk* will not be *raised* with their consent, against their white brethren." And the tribes from which the delegates came did remain re-

*The Indian in this oil painting by Samuel Morse may be Petalesharro, modeled after the portrait by King (compare inset and page 25).*

"THE OLD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES," CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

markably peaceful as the inexorable tide of white settlement reached the headwaters of the Missouri.

What became of the delegates? Eagle of Delight died of measles within weeks of her return from Washington. The grief-stricken Shaumonekusse vowed to fast to death, but friends forced him to eat, and he lived to become head chief of the Oto. In 1823, upon the death of his brother, Sharitarish became chief of the Grand Pawnee, only to die himself within a year. The Pawnee chief Peskelechaco died in 1826, killed while leading a counterattack against an Osage war party that had raided his village. Petalesharro lived until 1841, becoming one of the most respected and influential leaders of the Pawnee. For most of the delegates, however, the journey to see the Great Father must have been the high point of their lives. Thus, it is fitting that the five portraits now hang in the president's house for all Americans to see and to "reflect on the times that are past."

**Herman J. Viola** *is editor of* Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives, *and has performed extensive research on the work of Charles Bird King and the War Department Gallery of Thomas L. McKenney.*

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

In reproducing these eight portraits by Charles Bird King, THE AMERICAN WEST has reconstructed the nucleus War Department gallery that Thomas L. McKenney began in 1822. By 1840 it numbered more than 140 portraits. Although fire destroyed the gallery, King fortunately had made copies of many of the early portraits for his own use. The author, with the aid of a grant from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society, is trying to locate, identify, and catalog all extant versions, such as those that appear here. The magnificent "Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri, and Pawnees," the only known group Indian portrait by King, appears to have been a studio study, perhaps painted after the delegation left Washington. It was not a part of the War Department gallery.

The story of the O'Fallon delegation was gleaned primarily from official records in the custody of the National Archives and Records Service. Most pertinent were the letters relating to Indian affairs received and sent by the secretary of war, Treasury reports, and records of the Office of Indian Trade. The archival sources were supplemented by contemporary newspapers, *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, W. Faux's *Memorable Days in America*, and the three-volume *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* by McKenney and James Hall, which provided biographical sketches of seven of the delegates.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

# JOHN P. CLUM

## The Inside Story of an Inimitable Westerner

by Marjorie Clum Parker

NANTAN-BETUNNYKAHYEH, friend of Eskiminzin and captor of Geronimo, was my grandfather. So was the founding and fearless, always alliterative editor of the *Tombstone Epitaph*, who became mayor of that roaring Arizona mining camp and defender of Wyatt Earp; and the special United States postal commissioner who climbed the Chilkoot ice stairs and floated down the Yukon in a canoe to establish the first Alaskan post office; and that eager young combatant in the first intercollegiate football game (Rutgers vs. Princeton) played in the United States; and that unruffled old man who planted the first—no, it must have been the second—Arabian date palm garden in the Coachella Desert of California.

My grandfather is so much in the public domain that he's



***Agent Clum with Chatto and Eskiminzin (right), chief of the Arivaipas, on the San Carlos reservation in the Arizona Territory.***

in comic books. In the gripping finale of one, he rides into the sunset with a U.S. cavalry officer—a pairing-off that he would sooner have been shot than caught at. In a 1956 "B" movie, *Walk the Proud Land*, and its interminable television reruns, Grandfather, portrayed by Audie Murphy, leaves us grandchildren unsure as to whether grandmother was that light-eyed Indian maiden or the other one.

In most southwestern histories John P. Clum appears as an enlightened man, years ahead of his time in his achievements as agent to the fiercely unsubmissive Apaches, and later as an outspoken, crusading editor in the hottest silver property in the West where he was marked for assassination. In some few accounts he is put down as an upstart—a bombast who set himself against the army, public opinion, and the early Establishment. Whichever he may have been, I seem to be the last one left to know what *else* he was.

He was born in 1851, of Dutch stock—a Clum and a Van Deusen—in upstate New York. He was schooled at Hudson River Institute and Rutgers College, and at twenty-two was nominated by the Dutch Reformed church to become agent to the Apaches on the San Carlos reservation in Arizona Territory.

On arriving there, he was shocked to discover the War Department was pursuing a policy of steady extermination of the Apaches, while the Interior Department acquiesced. He was sickened to meet his first charge, Eskiminzin, chief of the Arivaipas, hobbled in leg-irons at Camp Grant because "he [was] an Apache and the major [didn't] like him."

His derby hat barely doffed, Clum ordered the two companies of U.S. cavalry on the reservation to keep hands off while he began to rebuild a concept of self-government not unlike tribal law. Apache police brought offenders before an Apache court where, if convicted, they were sentenced by Apache judges and delivered to Apache guards. Later an Apache territorial militia was formed; it marched four hundred miles with Clum to make the only forcible capture of the murdering Geronimo. Self-sufficiency and full stomachs for the ragtag, redskinned warriors came with his purchases of cattle, sheep, goats, and burros, and with the cultivation of corn and feed grasses. The only good Indians weren't dead—they were making a living at San Carlos. Other bands straggled in to join the original eight hundred in their wickiup villages.

Five thousand Apaches—Arivaipas, Rio Verdes, Coyoteros, Yumas, Pinals, Warm Springs, Chiricahuas—finally were at peace on the reservation in 1877. For the three years of John Clum's jurisdiction, no renegades had holed up there, no Indians had run off, no cattle had been stolen. Drunken *tuhlepah* parties were down; otherwise spirits were up. Then the Indian Bureau gave in to political pressure and allowed the army to move back to supervise the reservation. A minuscule working democracy of red men was to go down the drain because Arizona merchants were hungry for military contracts to feed soldiers and mules.

Protesting hotly and to no avail, only bringing down a spate of invective and ridicule from higher up, John Clum resigned. He relinquished his $1,600 annual pay and said a painful goodbye to his close friends Eskiminzin, Sneezer, Goodah Goodah, and Tauelclyee. He prophesied to the territorial papers that army occupation at San Carlos would trigger new and bloody fighting. As if compelled to fulfill his prophecy, the army released Geronimo to reservation privileges. He escaped, luring with him to Mexico the disenchanted Victorio, Warm Springs chief, and Nachee, son of Cochise, deceased chief of the Chiricahuas, along with their followers. The new Apache wars went on for nine years, costing five hundred lives and twelve million dollars.

GRANDFATHER bought the *Tucson "Citizin"* and changed it from weekly to daily, the better to belabor Arizona and Washington politicians. He sold it and established the *Tombstone Epitaph* and belabored outlaws and rustlers along with politicians. He was a courageous editor and a factual, if sometimes irascible reporter. He was elected mayor of Tombstone and hired Virgil Earp as chief of police. Virgil hired his brother Morgan as deputy. Brother Wyatt already was a deputy U.S. marshal. One Wednesday afternoon the Earps, with Doc Holliday, met the Clantons and the McLowerys in the OK Corral, and practically everybody on this globe knows the outcome. In twenty seconds, thirty-four bullets were shot; two McLowerys and one Clanton were dead; two Earps, Virgil and Morgan, wounded. Grandfather's editorial defense of the Earps' actions and his outspoken attacks on the rowdy and lawless element that the Clantons seemed to represent brought retribution. Friends and cohorts of the Clantons—or perhaps they were just anti-Earp partisans—ambushed a stagecoach Clum was riding, and the doughty editor leapt into the darkness and walked half the night to avoid becoming copy for his own obituary column.

A year later my grandmother, his Molly, love of his life, died in childbirth. He buried her in Boot Hill and took my three-year-old father to relatives in Washington, D.C. He sold the *Epitaph* and began the wandering and writing that continued until his death.

His biography has been variously embroidered and put into print maybe a thousand times—second- and thirdhand accounts, men's comments on other men's comments, old dead records amassed into one long humorless record. Nowhere, in all those pages emerges the spirit and energy and joy of the man himself—not even a recognizable whiff of him—of clean linen and Lucky Strikes and a slap of bay rum and his Cecile Brunner boutonniere.

He was a stocky man, about five feet nine inches tall, relaxed, and a good dancer. His face was strong, big-nosed, impassive; his hands, covered with brown freckles, often waved airily about. He always wore detachable stiff collars and bow ties, usually blue. Bald except for a white fringe, he

*John Philip Clum was among the hardy souls who climbed the ice stairs of Chilkoot Pass during the Alaskan gold rush, as shown in this photo of the pass in 1898.*

maintained a trim white moustache over his long upper lip, and his eyes were bright blue under papery, triangular lids. "It was Apache humor to name me Nantan-betunnykahyeh," he said. "It means Boss-with-the-high-forehead. From the time I was twenty, my forehead extended on and on, finally almost to the back of my neck."

He used to give a rub to that polished baldpate when he was amused. If he was openly delighted—with a child's welcome, a poem recited, a really good pun—he would dance an impromptu little soft-shoe, a divertissement, then bow, rub his head, and out of the side of his mouth whisper something ridiculous like, "Don't let it get around, but I am the former governor of New Mexico incognito." And of course he was, for three weeks anyway. When he was a Signal Corps weatherman in Santa Fe before he went to San Carlos, Governor Giddings had to go to Washington and asked young Clum to keep an eye on things. He slept in the royal bedroom of the palace, and the amiable *Hispanos* touched their sombreros and called him *el gobernador*.

I CAME TO KNOW my paternal grandfather when my father moved his family to California. My father, Woodworth Clum, was a news reporter too. If it was black and white and read in Washington, D.C., he had worked on it: *Post, Star, Times,* and *Herald*. He came to Los Angeles to start an evening paper and nearly did. We built a house in Beverly Hills, fenced out the coyotes, and waited for Grandpa Clum to come to dinner. He lived about 125 miles away on the acres of sand and mesquite he and Albert Augustine, a mission Indian, were transforming into an oasis.

He had a Dodge sedan with disc wheels, striped upholstery, and summer seat covers, which he drove straight-armed as if his lead horse needed handling. I would hang around the corner outside our house waiting for the Dodge to hum up Rexford Drive from Santa Monica Boulevard. Sometimes he would drive right by, leaving me yelling on the curb; then he would stop, back up, and lean out to inquire, "Little girl, does the Sultan of Turkey reside here?"

Or he would wheel around in a squealing U-turn, pull up

*While in Nome, Alaska, establishing a post office system, Clum (right) was photographed with an unidentified friend and Wyatt Earp, who operated a saloon in the gold-rush town.*

the brake, step out, and consult his watch. "Made good time, excellent time. I am now ready"—he'd take my dirty paw and bow over it—"to kiss the dainty white hand of the Lady Iseult [or Marian or Guinevere]." I would nearly die giggling. Then he'd straighten up. "I am also ready for a small libation." He would release my step-grandmother from inside that windowed, wheeled box and escort her into our house, where my father already was shaking a cocktail shaker.

Sometimes, if my older brother and sister were waiting in the dark front hall, Grandpa Clum would hump his shoulders, shut one eye, widen the other horribly, lower his upper false teeth into a terrifying grimace, and clump around after us, Quasimodo. We fell over one another shrieking.

Harry Carr, longtime columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, once wrote that he found John P. Clum to be "an elderly fashion plate, immaculate, cultured, charming, suggesting Lord Asquith or Sir Edward Grey rather than Wild Bill Hickok . . . [who] rode over the old trails dressed by the best tailor in town and in a limousine with the dashboard radio pouring out waltzes from the latest New York revues." I know for a fact that Grandpa Clum's suits came off the rack at Mullen & Bluett — partly because he never had a great deal of money, but mainly because his mind was never on more than the decent necessities. He bought his only pair of reading glasses at a five-and-ten-cent store. That limousine belonged to a good friend, Dr. C. G. Toland, who rode on the jump seat.

But later Carr mourned him more perceptively as a "merry-hearted man," and so he was. Those libations before dinner, which I now figure were bruised martinis, and the wine, of which we kids were allowed a glass, may have helped, but our family dinner parties were hilarious gatherings that shook the red-walled dining room, tinkled the tea service on the sideboard, and caused the airedale to thump his tail.

Grandpa Clum told funny stories. Once he arranged for thirty-five Apaches to stage a war dance in Tucson's main plaza. The chanters and drummers began in the full moonlight, and the dancers appeared around a campfire, stripped to their waists, bodies and faces hideously painted, bearing bows and arrows or rifles. They circled the fire, stamping and splitting the night with war cries.

The chief justice edged up to Grandfather. "Hadn't you better stop this before they get out of control?"

"Judge," he replied, "we have just begun to dance."

The finale came with a rising chorus of yells, followed by a fusillade of rifle shots. Nobody but John P. Clum knew the

cartridges were blanks. The audience took to its heels. The Apaches finished their performance alone in the moonlit plaza. After a final salvo they mildly came to company attention, and Grandfather thanked them on behalf of the departed audience. They had a good laugh. The citizenry eventually crept back from the shadows and thanked them, too, and raised a purse to buy the Apaches uniforms of white pants, red shirts, and obsolete army hats.

Grandfather was a Shakespeare quoter and a shameless punner. My father was a match for him, although given more to Omar Khayyam, Poe, and Kipling's *Gunga Din*. Both could tell a story with that added fillip, perhaps stretching it a trifle causing my mother and grandmother to issue breathless chidings: "Wood-ie!" "Oh, Jock!" It seems to me that every family dinner party I can remember wound up with my mother having to tweak off her butterfly pince-nez and throw her damask napkin over her head.

MY FATHER loved his father very much. Although he was raised by his two grandmothers, the motherless boy and restless man were always close. In the trunks of family mementos left to me, I came on a stack of letters written to father by Grandpa Clum—letters postmarked Texas, California, Montana, New York. I remember one sternly counseling my father against professional bicycle racing: it held little future; he should set his sights higher, wake up to "order, purpose, and effort!" Father, however, pedaled furiously on, racing as a partner of Barney Oldfield's, once spilling on an indoor wooden track and ending up splintered; for a time he steered a racing sextet, if such a vehicle can be imagined.

In 1898, when John P. Clum got his orders to go to Alaska and establish a postal system for the gold-mad hordes pouring into the territory, he stopped off in Cleveland to see his son at Western Reserve University. My father wrote that his father sat opposite him, not looking at him. "This is a long trip I'm taking." Silence. "Hate to go alone." Silence. Then father and son looked at one another and snickered.

"When do we go?" asked the son.

Their last trip together was a pilgrimage. In 1931 the San Carlos reservation was to be flooded by backwater from the new Coolidge Dam. John P. Clum had not been back in fifty years, although he kept in touch; I found canceled checks to Tauelcylee, an Indian—five dollars worth. In an epilogue to his own book, *Apache Agent*, my father wrote about their farewell trip to San Carlos with Dr. Toland and Harry Carr in the melodious limousine.

Grandpa Clum, eighty now, was the life of the party, telling old tales until they rolled through Globe, twenty miles from San Carlos. Then he fell silent, sitting forward on the edge of the seat, looking out through the open window on the wild country he loved. The car came to a stop just inside the south entrance to the reservation, and Agent Kitch welcomed them. A group of twenty-five or thirty waiting Apaches was milling around about a hundred yards away.

The great moment had arrived. John P. Clum looked quickly at the Apaches and started with a slow, halting step toward the long-anticipated reunion. At the same instant an old Indian, wrinkled, grey, but erect, stepped out from his companions, waved his cane, and came forward gesticulating.

"Nantan-betunnykahyeh," he shouted feebly, "*Enju! Enju!*"

Grandfather hurried. His lips moved but no sound came from them. Then the two old fellows met. "Goodah Goodah!" exclaimed the white man. Goodah's cane fell to the ground. White arms and red arms entwined. Words were mumbled. For a moment they stood in silent embrace—John P. Clum and Goodah Goodah, one of the original Apache police.

"Where is Na-good-es-azy?"

"Dead."

"And Eskinospas?"

"Dead."

"Casadoro? Chiquito? Sagully?"

"All dead."

A dust cloud appeared half a mile up the road. An ancient Indian pony was heading our way, half-walking, half-trotting.

"Sneezer!" came a cry from one of the Indians.

Sneezer, riding bareback, whacked his heels against the pony's ribs, finally slid off, and finished the journey on his own unsteady legs. Half blind but smiling, Sneezer shouted something in Apache. Father looked quickly at the interpreter, "What did he say?"

"He said, 'Pony too slow.' "

Again two old comrades met, over a lapse of fifty years—again the embrace, a glimpse of tears.

There was a luncheon and an hour-long "smoke" in the semicircle of red men and one white. Young Apaches stood around on the edges listening. When the goodbyes came at last, Sneezer, dry-eyed but very serious, spoke.

"We will never see you again, Nantan Clum. We are both old men. We have lived long and seen much. Goodbye."

A year later Grandpa Clum went out to pick his morning rose and, with it in his hand, dropped dead. The funeral was a spectacle, a pageant. The loving, living old man was transformed into a great dead king, and all the old nobles from the golden days in the Arizona Territory and the Alaskan Territory, and everyone who had ever heard of him or read of him, or delivered his mail or brought the morning milk or been his neighbor, came to witness his passing. In the huge, crowded chapel, flowers were massed around the walls to the ceiling. A minister orated, a governor's message was read, prayers given, and then to mournful waves of organ music, a long silent line of people began to shuffle past his bier. A young man in olive-drab uniform walked up to the coffin, raised his arms over it, and spoke a farewell in Apache.

**Marjorie Clum Parker** *has been in the field of journalism as reporter and editor in Washington, D.C. and Southern California.*

AMON CARTER MUSEUM

*Brownsville, Texas, in 1864, bustling with trade from across the Rio Grande.*

# AN AUSPICIOUS

## *Between a Confederate Secret Agent*

JUNE 26, 1861, was an important day for the Confederate states of America, although President Jefferson Davis was probably unaware of the propitious events that transpired and was unacquainted with the diplomat and Mexican governor who played the leading roles. He did know that both Britain and France had considered a declaration of neutrality (which would have amounted to unofficial recognition of the Confederacy) and that southern General John B. Magruder had claimed victory in the first major battle of the war, Big Bethel, giving the Confederacy a tremendous mental edge in the first phases of the conflict. But the interview that occurred in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo León on June 26 could have been one of the turning points in the struggle; as it was, it enabled Texas and surrounding states to continue fighting months after most southerners were exhausted and their supplies depleted.

On that day José A. Quintero, secret agent for the Confederate states, talked with Governor Santiago Vidaurri, the *caudillo* who carefully controlled the Rio Grande frontier of Mexico with discipline and pragmatism. The pair already knew each other and respected each other's strong character and obvious talent. Quintero, as a twelve-year-old genius, had attended Harvard College, supporting himself after his father's death by teaching Spanish. Before leaving Cambridge, he had become an intimate friend of both Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Ralph Waldo Emerson. He received a law degree in Cuba, then returned to the United States to begin a career in journalism, which led him to several different newspapers, including a Spanish-language illustrated paper published by the famous New Yorker, Frank Leslie. After the Civil War, he worked for the *Galveston News* and the *New Orleans Picayune*. Quintero was an extremely able man:

AMON CARTER MUSEUM

*The cotton press at Piedras Negras, also a center of rebel trade.*

# AGREEMENT

## *and a Governor of Northern Mexico*

by Ronnie C. Tyler

intelligent, articulate, and sincere. He was undoubtedly the most important Confederate diplomat in Mexico.

Vidaurri was a mysterious character, talented and dynamic, but surrounded by rumor and legend. Documents indicate that he was born to a poor Mexican family in Lampazos, Nuevo León, but stories were circulated that he was really the son of an unknown Indian brave, raised to adulthood by roaming bands of *indios barbaros* in eastern Coahuila. The known facts about his career also seem contradictory. He first came into public notice in 1832, when he was jailed for cutting off a soldier's hand, yet he soon became secretary to the governor of the state. And he served under both conservative and liberal governors, a feat seemingly impossible in a society that firmly believed in rewarding friends and disavowing enemies. Although Quintero had met Vidaurri while the governor was a self-imposed exile in San Antonio, Texas, a few years earlier, he had no way of knowing what a man of such varied background would demand in return for the cooperation that the Confederate government sought.

How many grudges did Vidaurri hold? Did he remember the ruthless invasion of Mexico during the war of 1846? Was he seeking revenge because Texas slave owners had sponsored at least one major foray into his state shortly after he seized the governments of Nuevo León and Coahuila in 1855?

Quintero reasoned that although the *caudillo* had good reason for resentment, little harm could come from an interview. Vidaurri was rather un-Mexican in many ways, he thought, and had emphasized the different character of the *norteños* when he seized the state of Coahuila and brought it under the control of his efficient administration in Monterrey. The governor had brought many benefits to his people, and hoped for more. And he had the best fighting force in

AMON CARTER MUSEUM

*José A. Quintero, probably the most important agent of the Confederate States in Mexico.*

all Mexico, according to an experienced German's report—young, able officers, a well-trained and adequately armed militia, and a closely-knit professional corps.

But Quintero also knew that Vidaurri was at odds with the federal administration of President Benito Juárez. Vidaurri had refused to assist other liberals in the Revolution of Ayutla, which swept the old dictator, Antonio López de Santa Anna, from power in 1855. Yet, he had proved to be a figure of national prominence, even winning some support for the presidency, by announcing and prosecuting his own plan of Monterrey—contrary to the wishes of a number of victorious liberals. In 1859 members of his own military and bureaucracy deserted him and, for a short time, ousted him from the governorship. He had since returned to power, outwardly appearing as strong as ever, but there was still a serious threat that his former lieutenants, such as Ignacio Zaragoza, would return with a federal army and attempt to end Mexico's most outstanding experiment in states' rights.

And at the time of the early 1860s, Napoleon III was plotting to invade central Mexico and place a friendly monarch in Mexico City — a fact known by Quintero. If the French were successful, then surely Vidaurri would face serious pressures as the invaders tried to extend their control northward. Yes, Quintero decided, this was the time to approach the governor.

THE MOST IMPORTANT point of business for the Confederacy was border peace. It faced a difficult struggle on the northern front, and President Davis did not want to be forced to station thousands of troops along the Rio Grande to control bandits, marauding Indians, or Mexican troops. A second item for discussion was trade between Texas and northern Mexico.

The Confederacy had, of course, tried to establish diplomatic relations through normal channels, appointing John T. Pickett, former United States consul in Vera Cruz, the Confederate envoy in Mexico City. President Juárez, however, hoped to secure a loan for several million dollars from the Union government and could not afford to recognize the rebel states. Nor did Pickett's undiplomatic behavior help his cause —soon after his arrival he was thrown in jail for participating in a barroom brawl. Had it been for Pickett to achieve, southern relations with Mexico would have failed forever.

Quintero did not know of his comrade's miserable per-

*Governor Santiago Vidaurri controlled the Mexican Río Grande frontier during the Civil War.*

AMON CARTER MUSEUM

FROM THE COLLECTION OF JENKINS GARRETT

***Monterrey during the Mexican War; from this city Vidaurri presided over the northern Mexican states of Nuevo León and Coahuila, and the business of trade with the U.S.***

formance when he approached Vidaurri. He opened the interview by suggesting that there was a desperate need for a reciprocal agreement regarding trade, fugitives, and raiding across the international boundary. He knew very well that the history of the lower Rio Grande had been hectic, that it consisted primarily of illicit trade and daring filibusters, and that the United States had been successful in policing the line only so long as it kept mounted riflemen spaced along the river. Since the Confederacy could not afford as many soldiers as the Union had, cooperation was a necessity.

Being much more candid than Quintero expected, Vidaurri agreed that the border problems could be considerably lessened by cooperation, and he proposed a method: Coahuila would join the Confederacy. Reports had frequently been published, both in the Texas press and in official gazettes of some Mexican states, that the *caudillo* intended to secede from the federal government of Mexico and establish an independent Republic of Sierra Madre — a charge which he repeatedly denied. Whether or not these rumors were true, annexation by the Confederacy, which had established an "enlightened" republic with states' rights as one of its cornerstones, now seemed attractive to him. Such a union promised new markets for raw materials from Mexico, access to *norteamericano* ingenuity, and security by alliance with a powerful neighbor. As he parted with Quintero, Vidaurri expressed his respect and admiration for President Davis and asked the agent to carry his proposal faithfully to Richmond.

Quintero's communication of the annexation offer stimulated a radical change in Confederate foreign policy toward Mexico, where the bungling, hotheaded Pickett had ruined any chance of working with the Juárez government. With the arrival of the news that the desired cooperation was forthcoming from Governor Vidaurri, who wielded the real power in the north, Confederate Secretary of State R. M. T. Hunter shifted the emphasis to Monterrey. President Davis appointed Quintero as permanent representative to Vidaurri.

Davis, however, chose to decline Vidaurri's offer of annexation for several very good reasons. First, the Confederacy, finding its own ports paralyzed by a Union blockade, needed northern Mexico as a free, neutral area; Confederate control would allow the Union to extend its blockade to include the ports of Matamoras and Tampico in the state of Tamaulipas, both of which exported significant amounts of cotton and imported numerous war supplies that were eventually shipped into Texas. Second, if Vidaurri had seceded from the Mexican union, President Juárez undoubtedly would have declared war on him, probably forcing the South to fight as well.

Third, and perhaps most important, if the Confederacy had successfully occupied Matamoras, it might have soon

*Loading wagons at Matamoros, across the Rio Grande from Brownsville.*

found itself contesting France for control of the port. Davis was well aware of French designs on Mexico, even before the allied powers—France, England, and Spain—landed their troops at Vera Cruz in late 1861 and early 1862. He was not especially concerned about the interior, but, should the French conquer the patriot forces there, they would also need control of the north. This would place the Confederacy in a position opposite France, therefore thwarting the more important southern goal—that France help the Confederacy remain independent, perhaps by declaring war on the United States.

Some historians have added a fourth point, almost as an afterthought and rather humorous but for the truth it contained: perhaps President Davis already had enough states' rights governors in the Confederacy — men like Joseph E. Brown of Georgia—and did not need to add a volatile, self-seeking Latin to his list.

VIDAURRI probably understood the realities Jefferson Davis faced and was not surprised when Quintero delivered the polite rejection; he still agreed to international cooperation along the border. As a result of the arrangement, a great trade began over historic routes, which grew larger as the effectiveness of the Union blockade increased. A lively exchange of cotton for war supplies such as lead, saltpeter, ammunition, powder, and copper ensued. It was an "era of cotton" in the northern Mexican states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas, with cotton mills springing up toward the interior and cotton presses on the border. Agents placed advertisements in Texas newspapers, pleading with the planters to consign their cotton to them, rather than the government, for marketing in Mexico.

Of course, there were many speculators and swindlers involved in the trade, and even established merchants used the opportunity to build fortunes, some of which still exist today in Monterrey. By no means the least of the latter (some would place him in the former category) was Governor Vidaurri's son-in-law Patrick Milmo, an Irishman who immigrated to Mexico soon after the close of the Mexican War.

Because of his relationship to the *caudillo*, Milmo was one of the first merchants to participate in the trade and got some of the most lucrative contracts with the Confederate government. Unfortunately, he did not realize what a slow-paying customer he had until the middle of 1863. By then the South had fallen behind in its promised delivery schedule by several hundred bales of cotton, and almost no progress could be reported, despite the frenzied efforts of Quartermaster Simeon Hart in San Antonio.

Milmo decided to collect as best he could. The opportunity came in November 1863, when the Confederate Treasury Department attempted to ship sixteen million dollars in Treasury notes to Texas via northern Mexico. With the compliance of traitorous officers in the Quartermaster De-

AMON CARTER MUSEUM

*The port of Brownsville, occupied by the U. S. Army under Major General Banks.*

partment in Matamoras (the Confederates had moved their operations across the river from Brownsville when Union General N. P. Banks captured it), Milmo not only learned the contents of the seven large cases but soon had them in his possession. The confiscation undoubtedly was carried out with the full knowledge of Governor Vidaurri, who owned 50 percent interest in many of Milmo's enterprises. Quintero protested immediately but was told by Vidaurri that he might appeal Milmo's action in the courts of Nuevo León if he was dissatisfied.

Little did Vitaurri and Milmo realize that they had created more of an emergency than they could handle. The money was badly needed in Texas, where the government had to compete with the state government and speculators for cotton; and only cotton—or, of course, currency, which was not readily available—could provide the desperately needed war material. General Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, acted quickly on the recommendation of Quintero, who provided accurate intelligence and remarkably astute suggestions throughout the incident.

Kirby Smith ordered that all cotton shipments to Mexico be stopped until the notes were recovered, thus cutting off an estimated fifty thousand to sixty thousand dollars per month in customs revenue, on which Vidaurri heavily depended. Then he named a distinguished three-man commission to go to Monterrey to resolve the impasse. Because cooler heads reigned, the sixteen million dollars in notes were recovered, Milmo received payment in full, and the cotton trade quickly returned to almost normal.

Just how long the trade would have continued and whether it could have sustained the South had it been militarily able to endure are interesting speculations that, unfortunately, must go unanswered. Millions of dollars of goods and supplies came into Texas, but partial and repetitious documentation permits only incomplete accounting. Almost without exception, the goods were consumed in the Trans-Mississippi Department, primarily Texas. And any supply line that reached from Mexico, via Texas, to, for example, Atlanta, would have been dangerously long and vulnerable at several obvious points. Indeed, it is doubtful from available figures (witness one hundred thousand dollars worth of medicine or sixty-four thousand pairs of pants by the end of 1864) that Mexico could have sustained the South, even in peacetime, much less during a war to the death.

At any rate, the Mexican trade never reached its full potential because of events in Mexico that were inspired by the French intervention. By taking Puebla in May 1863, French General Elie Frédéric Forey forced President Juárez and his motley cabinet to flee northward to San Luis Potosí. After a short stay there, with French and royalist forces again threatening, Juárez continued his march to Saltillo, about fifty miles west of Monterrey — a clear encroachment upon Vidaurri's domain.

*Continued on page 63*

# Our Frontier Heritage and the Environment

by Leo E. Oliva

*In Europe people talk a great deal of the wilds of America, but the Americans themselves never think about them; they are insensible to the wonders of inanimate nature and they may be said not to perceive the mighty forests that surround them till they fall beneath the hatchet. Their eyes are fixed upon another sight: the American people views its own march across these wilds, draining swamps, turning the course of rivers, peopling solitudes, and subduing nature.*

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *ca.* 1830

Ecologists and conservationists have provided ample evidence that the environment of spaceship Earth has been damaged, perhaps beyond repair, by the destructive practices of an overcrowded people in an industrial society. Many Americans remain largely indifferent to the disappearance of forests and wildlife, the erosion of soil, and the poisoning of the most vital resources of all—air and water. They are apparently optimistic that somehow the problems will be solved; few, it seems, have reached the profound conclusion that the cartoon character Pogo proclaimed regarding the environmental crisis: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

An important reason for the indifference and the optimism may be the frontier heritage, as suggested by a scientist-journalist team, J. I. Bregman and Sergei Lenormand in *The Pollution Paradox:* "It is a twentieth century hangover from an era intoxicated by the plunder and conquest of an immense continent, then rich in minerals, forests, game, rivers, fish, and a sea of grass that was greedily plowed into the soil, leaving the earth naked and defenseless before the ravages of rain and wind. Then the fertile earth seemed inexhaustible, the supply of crystal waters endless, and fresh air infinite."

The influence of the frontier experience in the shaping of American society and culture has long been recognized and debated. The westward movement and the conquest of a virgin land, described as bringing civilization to the wilderness, have usually been portrayed as a great American ac-

complishment—and, in many cases, this was true. Everything, from the clearing of trees and removal of the natives along the Atlantic seaboard to the killing of the buffalo and plowing of the grasslands of the Great Plains, has been assessed as a contribution to that national progress. Much of our written history, however, has ignored or whitewashed the destructive and wasteful practices of the pioneers, providing a distorted view of the frontier heritage and the environment. This reply, in singling out the baneful deeds of those who won the West, may appear equally distorted, but it is presented with no intention of denying the accomplishments of the pioneers or destroying their image as the courageous, even heroic individuals they were.

The frontiersmen began the rape of the continent and destroyed or damaged many of the natural resources. Many then escaped from the destruction they had brought by moving on to a new frontier. Unfortunately, they continued their harmful behavior wherever they went, until no frontier remained. Ray A. Billington analyzed the motives which caused people to move to a new frontier and concluded that "the principal expelling forces driving men westward were overcrowding and the urge to escape an uncongenial environment." With respect to the environment, the frontier was a safety-valve; it permitted Americans to follow ruinous practices and escape the consequences for several generations. The persistence of frontier attitudes has increased the difficulties for their descendants in adjusting to an urban-industrial, closed-space society.

Obviously, the pioneers who encountered the difficulties, suffered the hardships, and performed the hard work of the conquest of nature could not foresee the long-range consequences of their actions, and they should not be condemned. They destroyed much through ignorance, and historian Wilbur R. Jacobs declared they "were often intentionally and ruthlessly destructive." Still, they were amateurs when it came to polluting; it took their habits plus an industrial technology and higher population density to create the environmental crisis. As long as there was a West to escape to, or even a belief that new frontiers (including science and technology) would provide solutions to environmental problems, concern about conservation was confined to a very small minority. On the other hand, with the present knowledge about ecology and fragility of the environment, anyone should be condemned who continues the practice of destruction.

POPULATION is the root of the environmental crisis. The attitude reinforced by the frontier was that there was a critical need for more people in America. Large families were considered a blessing and encouraged, and immigration was usually welcomed. The result was that the population of the United States doubled approximately every generation from the late eighteenth through the late nineteenth centuries. While millions came from overseas, natural increase provided a still larger portion. The birthrate for the young nation in 1800—estimated at fifty-five births per thousand people—was highest in frontier regions and remained so until the frontier was gone. The death rate in 1800 was estimated at approximately twenty-five deaths per thousand people. Thus there was an annual 3 percent increase resulting from births over deaths; at this rate the population doubles in twenty-four years. As the country became more urbanized, the national birthrate declined. By 1900 births had fallen to thirty-two per thousand people and deaths to about seventeen per thousand, leaving an annual growth rate, exclusive of immigration, of 1.5 percent.

The population growth of western states and territories provided dramatic evidence of the increase in people. The literature promoting settlement, especially western newspapers, encouraged rapid population growth. Though not all infants survived, the average size of families on the frontier was large, ten children being a conservative estimate. Fifteen and even twenty births in a family was not unusual, and there are records of some with twenty-five and more. Procreation was encouraged, and early marriages were the rule, most occurring during the teen years (in many western regions the legal age for marriage was set at fourteen for girls and sixteen for boys). The disproportionate ratio of women to men on most frontiers increased the pressure on all females to marry.

Large families were considered an economic necessity. Because of the low man-to-land ratio, children provided an important labor supply in a time when muscle was still the major source of power. Most frontier farmers could not afford to hire help (many were in debt for their land and improvements), and those who could afford hired laborers often could not find them. One solution to the labor problem was to rear their own supply.

Over the generations there developed the belief in America that large families were virtuous in and of themselves. Even

though industrialization and urbanization reduced the need for large families and witnessed a decline in the national birthrate, there remained people who, as heirs of the frontier heritage, considered large families a sign of progress and service.

Fostered by such beliefs and the consequent high birthrate by the last half of the twentieth century, Americans had a population problem.

The man-to-land ratio declined with the population boom. In 1800 there were 104.2 acres of land for every man, woman, and child in the young nation. By 1870 there were still 48 acres per person; the population had grown from 5.3 million in 1800 to 38.5 million in 1870, but the land area of the nation had increased with the addition of everything west of the Mississippi River and south of the thirty-first parallel. By 1900 the acreage had dropped to 25 per person, and in 1930 it had declined to 15. Of that 15, only 3.91 acres were suitable for cultivation. Recent figures show that the acreage per person had dropped to 10.5, while the crop land was only 2.5 acres per person. A United States Soil Conservation Service official has predicted that 2.25 acres of crop land per person is the critical point, estimated to be reached in 1975.

A RAPIDLY INCREASING population was not the only problem created by the frontier philosophy. Since, as Lynn White, Jr., writes, "what we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship," the pioneer view of nature contributed to the ecological crisis. Most frontiersmen seemed to believe that nature belonged to man, and all stages of the frontier seemed bent on exploitation of natural resources. Whether it was furs, timber, water, minerals, grass, or land, the practice was to extract all that was possible while the getting was good and not worry about future generations. Because they believed there was enough for many years to come, too few gave any thought to using nature's bounty frugally or preserving it for their descendants.

Americans subdued their natural environment more quickly than any other people in history. During the era of the colonial frontier and as long as frontiersmen were moving into forested regions, the removal of the forest was the first stage of settlement, and the ax was the most important implement. Hans Huth, in his assessment of the changing views of conservation held by Americans, concluded that the ax was "the appropriate symbol of the early American attitude toward nature." Because forests were hard to clear and harbored Indians, they were considered obstacles to settlement and development. A lingering dislike, perhaps hatred, of trees survived the initial confrontation.

Foreign travelers often wrote critical accounts of American attitudes toward the forest, which may be considered as representative of their attitudes toward nature in general. Francis Hall penned this moving passage in 1818:

*. . . It is impossible to travel through the States without taking part with the unfortunate trees, who, unable like their persecuted fellows of the soil, the Indians, to make good a retreat, are exposed to every form and species of destruction Yankey* [sic] *convenience and dexterity can invent; felling, burning, rooting up, tearing down, lopping, and chopping, are all employed with most unrelenting severity. We passed through many forests whose leafless trunks, blackened with fire, rose above the underwood, like lonely columns, while their flat-wreathed roots lay scattered about.*

A Frenchman who visited the West at the same time shared similar feelings:

*The American, when he clears his land, has such difficulty in removing the trees which cover all the country that he seems to have declared war on the whole species; he does not spare a single one, and his residence is stripped of the shade that he could easily preserve.*

Another, describing Cincinnati in the early 1820s, was also critical of American abuses:

*These hills were covered with magnificent forest trees; but the inhabitants, guiltless of any taste for the picturesque, were rapidly extirpating them. An American has no idea that anyone can admire trees or wooded ground. To him a country well cleared, that is where every stick is cut down, seems the only one that is beautiful or worthy of admiration.*

Not only were the forests destroyed without provision for restoration, but farmlands were exhausted and topsoil was permitted to erode away; mineral lands were ravaged for only the highest quality ores as the miners came to loot and

pollute; streams were filled with sediments; and wildlife was destroyed and some species exterminated. The rape of the virgin domain continued, preparing the way for the prostitution of the continent. As Russel B. Nye succinctly observed: "Since American nature seemed inexhaustible, the pioneers acted as if it were." Without regulations to control his conduct, the frontiersman seemed not to realize that the great West was "anything more than so much raw material to be exploited here and now. . . . So he used the resources as he pleased."

The vast resources of the West confirmed the inherited Christian belief that nature belonged to man. The pioneers were convinced, as Nye observed, that "the American continent was meant by God to be used, and fortunately God had chosen them to use it. They did not hesitate to do so." Lynn White, Jr., offered the cogent conclusion that "we shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man."

William A. Baillie-Grohman, an Englishman who visited the Far West a half-century later, summed it up in forceful terms when he assessed the frontiersman:

*Nothing on the face of the broad Earth is sacred to him. Nature presents herself as his slave. He digs and delves wherever he fancies; forests are there but to be felled, or, if that process be too slow and laborious, to be set ablaze; mountains are made to be blasted or to be spirited away by the powerful jet from the nozzle of his hydraulic tube. Landscape itself is not secure, for eminences may be levelled, lakes laid dry, and the watercourse of rivers may be turned off, as best suits his immediate desires.*

*The same hands that tackle nature in such a robust, though shockingly irreverent manner, show little respect for the mandates and dignity of a more orderly social condition. They build a church that in weekdays can be used as a grain elevator; and with the same unceremonious haste that a "graveyard" is started, it will, should the soil happen to prove rich in previous ores, be turned into a silver mine.*

FRONTIER ATTITUDES were materialistic, of necessity, since most of the pioneer's time was spent in conquering the physical environment. Trapping furs, digging ore, transporting commodities, clearing land, building dwellings, making tools and household furnishings, constructing fences and corrals, planting and harvesting crops—virtually everything the frontiersman did involved material things. There was little time devoted to abstract thinking, to contemplation about the meaning of nature, of man, or of life. There was little respect for ideas, unless they would make a job easier or faster or both. As a result success and failure were measured in material terms, often to the detriment of the environment and natural resources. This attitude was closely connected with the idea of progress, which the frontier experience—largely out of necessity—reinforced.

Progress, to the frontiersman and to the rest of the nation, was material expansion—more people, more territory, more wealth. Community progress was measured in terms of population growth, miles of railroad track in operation, and production increases. Individual progress was accounted in terms of wealth—land, cattle, sheep, horses, furs and hides, gold and silver, or other commodities. Frederic L. Paxson, author of the first significant textbook about frontier history, concluded:

*The successful pioneer lived a life of progress. He began with untouched nature, and each year saw a larger area of cleared lands, a better group of buildings, a more selected herd of stock, and greater freedom due to increase in financial resources.*

This idea of progress, fixed in American culture through the frontier experience, assured that exploitation would remain the dominant attitude toward nature after the city and the factory had supplanted the pioneers.

Another American attitude influenced by the frontier was individualism. Much of the individualism attributed to the frontier may be more myth than reality, but there was one area of pioneer life in which individualism was fostered. That was economic individualism, bound up with the ethic (in turn reinforced by the frontier), which held that economic success was the measure of a man's character. A rugged economic individualism was developed, based on inherited beliefs and nourished by a frontier environment which made it possible for the self-made man to become a reality. This commitment to personal enterprise provided a rationale for

*Continued on page 61*

**A Matter of Opinion**

# CLEARCUT: In Reply

*The following letter is in response to the article "Clearcut," by Nancy Wood* (THE AMERICAN WEST, *November 1971), which presented a conservationist's view of the utilization of our National Forests. This article has generated from our readers considerable comment, an example of which is reproduced below, written by a representative of the U. S. Forest Service.*

TO THE EDITOR:

The most painful development hampering the conservation crusade is the misrepresentation of facts by the misinformed. So many interests in "conservation" seek to preserve one resource without understanding or examining the alternatives.

This type of conservationist is unable to see the land as a whole, in a constructive supportive role with man in his environment. He is too busy "saving" what is important to him at the moment, and he is very angry when told this conflicts in the long run with what is important to the nation. The result can be loss or destruction of another resource or of the very resource he seeks to preserve.

Nancy Wood's article in the November 1971 issue of THE AMERICAN WEST contains numerous misrepresentations of fact, and is not the paragon of objective writing in this era of the environmental crusade. "The list of National Forests that have been raped goes on and on," she says. Quite to the contrary, the National Forests system contains a fabulous array of aesthetic and resource values. In California alone there are 1.5 million acres of National Forest Wilderness (pictured in the article, "High Country in Season," in the same issue of THE AMERICAN WEST), and more will be added to the system. Forty-five percent of water yield in California comes from the National Forests. More than 44 million recreation visits were recorded in California's National Forests last year. The two billion board feet of timber harvested last year could produce two million homes, and yet we still have productive forests that can sustain that yield. Wilderness and timber-producing land alike share beautiful scenery and abundant wildlife.

One has to stop and realize that a forest is a complex community of living plants that grow in an interrelationship with each other. With the application of technology, through studies on soil types, their structure and characteristics, man has learned about land capability . . . how he can use the land without impairing its productivity. We have a sound scientific

US FOREST SERVICE

***These thirteen-year-old Douglas-fir trees were hand-planted in a thirteen-acre clearcut at Windgate Bar in the Klamath National Forest. Many of the trees have attained a height of fifteen feet since they were planted in 1958.***

basis for even-aged management ("clearcutting" or "patch-cutting") for perpetually culturing some tree species on certain land.

Douglas-fir is a tree in point: a unique tree, it will not normally reproduce itself under a dense, shaded, mature stand that Douglas-fir creates. Casting its shadow on the forest floor, no new trees are born. Mineral soil surface and full sunlight are needed before its seed can germinate and new trees can grow. This is why this species is harvested in a clear- or patch-cut method. Take a good look at a mature stand of Douglas-

*Continued on page 64*

*This page,* A MATTER OF OPINION, *is provided as an open forum. Contributions are invited, but should be limited to 750 words and must be signed.*

# The First American

REVIEWED BY ROBERT C. EULER

FROM THE PEN of C. W. Ceram has come another readable book, this one about the prehistory of North America. Actually, it is more than that; it is also a history of the explorations of archaeologists on this continent, explorations that have resulted in a relatively complete picture of pre-Columbian America.

**The First American: A Story of North American Archaeology** by C. W. Ceram *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1971; illus., maps, notes., biblio., index, $9.95).*

Perhaps it would be more correct to say that this book is about *part* of the prehistory of North America. Fourteen of the twenty-four chapters relate wholly or in large part to the American Southwest. Two speak of the so-called mound builders of the Midwest. Only scant treatment is given to the remainder of the United States and virtually no details are revealed about the many important archaeological discoveries that have been made in Canada and Mexico. But that should not deter the reader; it is exactly what the author intended.

Ceram's style, though lacking in the transitional verve of some of his earlier books, is aimed at holding one's attention through use of suspense, entertaining descriptions of notable discoveries, and comparisons with Euroamerican historic events. The reader is also in for all sorts of surprises not revealed in the chapter headings. This reviewer, a professional archaeologist, gleaned many enjoyable insights into prehistory through anecdotes of the people who have "dug it." One nice thing is that Ceram has refrained from the chronological approach that usually leaves the reader (of either prehistory or history) gagging in the dust of the ages.

On the contrary, this German-born editor for whom Ceram is but a pen name, has varied his chapters on culture-history and has included several important sections on the worth of archaeology, its "tools" and dating techniques, as well as a delightfully written prelude and epilogue. That prelude, incidentally, calculated to whet one's appetite, is about one of America's first archaeologists, the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson. Before he became the third president of the United States, Jefferson had accomplished the first stratigraphic (that is, scientific) archaeological excavation in this country!

The book then is divided into five sections. The first begins with a discussion of probably pre-Columbian Viking visits to the New World via Greenland and continues with a chapter treating of early sixteenth-century Spanish explorations from Mexico into what is now the American Southwest. At first, one wonders what these accounts have to do with *pre*-history in the United States, but Ceram utilizes them well to point out some archaeological myths such as Minnesota's alleged Viking "Kensington stone" and to set the stage in the Southwest for later explorations by nineteenth-century anthropologists and historians.

The nonspecialist will welcome this latter discussion of such hardy travelers as Charles Lummis, Adolph Bandelier, Frank Cushing, and Edgar Hewett. While their studies would not be considered "scientific" today, they nevertheless made significant contributions and laid a foundation upon which later professional archaeologists built.

As examples of the early twentieth-century professionals, Ceram chooses two: Alfred Kidder and his excavations at the pueblo of Pecos east of Santa Fe and Earl Morris's equally intensive work at Aztec Ruin and in Arizona's beautiful Canyon de Chelly. As one reads of the personal travails and successes of all these men, one can begin to appreciate their roles in the exciting history of scholarly exploration in the Southwest.

Ceram devotes the second section of his book to a discussion of the nature of archaeology, the reasons for studying it, and some of its important dating and interpretive techniques such as stratigraphy, ceramic analysis, radiocarbon and tree-ring dating. This is all well written but emphasizes archaeology only as a reconstruction of cultural history.

It is something of a disappointment that Ceram did not use his literary talents to discuss for the nonprofessional the rather dynamic changes that have occurred in archaeological rationale over the past several years. In these, the emphasis is no longer solely upon reconstructing history and establishing dates, but upon processes whereby human societies changed their life-styles and adapted to altering environments through time.

Part three of the book is perhaps the weakest section. The author, in a chapter entitled "Along the Road," attempts to take us on a highway and byway trip to some notable southwestern Indian ruins. None of this seems to hang together. It contains a number of minor factual errors and relies too heavily upon a secondary synthesis published in 1965.

But the text quickly picks up again in the next three chapters. One of these, which just as well could have been placed with those chapters descriptive of early archaeological exploration in the Southwest, sketches the turn-of-the-century investigations of the Wetherill brothers in the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde and in the huge prehistoric "apartment houses" of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico.

One of the most important steps toward the rise of sedentary, more urban life in the Americas was the domestication of plants and animals. Ceram talks about these—the dog and the turkey, and the host of plants of which corn was probably most important—in a well researched chapter, "The Story of Maize." While maize may not have been introduced to the American Southwest quite so early (3,600 B.C.) as Ceram's sources claim, the chapter nevertheless provides a key to one's understanding of the beginnings of settled life in the Americas.

Book four contains four chapters, two of which describe the discoveries and

*Continued on page 55*

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# The Art of the Old West

REVIEWED BY DONALD G. PIKE

*The Art of the Old West* is an enterprisingly all-inclusive title that is both less, and more, than it seems to promise: it is really only the art of the Gilcrease Institute, but the "Old West" is everything on the sunset side of Jamestown. The book is primarily a vehicle for the display of the most prized possessions of the Institute in Tulsa, reproducing the very best of the paintings, drawings, engravings, and sculpture that William Gilcrease acquired during an active and discriminating collecting career.

**The Art of the Old West** by Paul A. Rossi and David C. Hunt *(Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1971; 335 pp., appen., biblio., $30.00).*

The book is a beautiful example of what can be done if absolutely no compromise is made in production. Flawless color reproduction—bright, sharp, and large enough to be appreciated—is combined with an extremely heavy, coated paper to yield results as perfect as technology permits. Small extras, like warm browntone monochromes and a unique and suitably rough-hewn calligraphy, bespeak a pride in graphic design.

Despite a statement to the contrary on the dust jacket, even casual *aficionados* of the West-That-Was will find many of the paintings familiar; even so, the Gilcrease Institute can reassure itself with the knowledge that they have never been produced better. In the course of twelve sections of text and pictures that treat the usual eras and institutions of our westering (Indians, Fur Trade, Commerce, the Army, etc.), an impressive selection of paintings by Russell, Remington, Catlin, Bodmer, Moran, Miller, and Bierstadt is presented. In addition to the usual lesser luminaries and an occasional brilliant offering by the likes of Thomas Eakins or Jules Tavernier, there is a very large selection of paintings and sculpture by O. C. Seltzer and William Robinson Leigh.

The paintings, drawings, and sculpture are discussed in a text that rambles from brief descriptions of important eras of the West, to the artists, to the art, and back again, seeking to explain and justify the paintings in terms of their value to the study of history. It is a text written to accommodate graphics, and therefore assumes secondary importance when the book is considered as a whole, but it does make some very revealing assumptions that reflect not so much on the authors and the Gilcrease Institute, as on the state of the historical profession.

The thesis that runs throughout the text is that the art of the West, especially that of the Gilcrease, is a valuable historical tool—that it can show clearly and graphically what men, animals, and land looked like—offering insights not otherwise attainable. Unfortunately the authors scuttle this contention with their own text, which specifically traces a number of arguments over accuracy that were settled by research into newspapers, official documents, diaries, and interviews. When accuracy was established (or disproven) the concerned historians already had their answers — from the conventional sources—leaving the paintings little more than curious artifacts.

But maybe, despite some straying from absolute historical fidelity, the paintings remain works of art, capable of mirroring more than the shape of a saddle tree or the cut of a uniform. Maybe they remain impervious to the slow abrasion of plodding dissection by academicians, able to render something of the West that is too personal for generalization, too ethereal for ponderous verbiage, too fleeting and ambivalent for Aristotelian logic. Art can be a useful tool for historians, and it is worth mentioning, but when it becomes the essential rationale for the study of art one begins to wonder if Clio has transcended the other muses to become a vengeful goddess, threatening pestilence for any who would fail to honor her above all others.

In closing, and in all fairness, it should be mentioned that Rossi and Hunt do acknowledge in the last chapter that even though all paintings are not good history, they need not be abandoned; they might be good for studying myth.

**Donald G. Pike** *is on the editorial staff of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

# Garden in the Grasslands:

REVIEWED BY HOMER E. SOCOLOFSKY

THE AREA of the Great Plains is difficult to delimit. Usually its assumed boundaries encompass parts of ten states, three Canadian provinces, and on occasion portions of five states in Mexico. No state is considered wholly within the Great Plains, and a thesis has evolved that this region is a have-not or colonial area because of its scanty population and lack of political or economic influence even at the state level.

**Garden in the Grasslands: Boomer Literature of the Central Great Plains** by David M. Emmons (*University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1971; 220 pp., intro., illus., biblio., index, $10.00*).

*Garden in the Grasslands*, by Professor David M. Emmons of the University of Montana, concentrates on the initial interest and enthusiasm for the central grasslands — the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming. Characteristically, the author generalizes on the Great American Desert theme, but with more precision he presents the boomer literature that was designed to counteract the desert image. Promoters sought to replace the reputed desert with a veritable Garden of Eden. Neither those who saw the grasslands as a desert nor the creators of the garden myth understood the climate and character of the region with which they were dealing. This high-risk area in American agriculture can be subjected to some human controls, but boomers in the settlement days saw possibilities for far more. Their theory that "rain follows the plow" was advanced as a solution to the scant rainfall, often below the annual minimum of twenty inches needed to carry on field-crop agriculture of the type understood in earlier days.

The first six chapters of this book present the literature of the late nineteenth century that promoted the grasslands. The large-scale jumps in time and place are often confusing to the reader. Grassland and Great Plains, as synonyms, are hardly justified. The tone of these chapters is patronizing; promoters are represented as deliberately misrepresenting their wares. Even their admonition to prospective settlers that adequate capital was needed for successful beginnings in the grassland frontier is viewed with suspicion as an attractive come-on to those who were unprepared. Far better is the final chapter that ably interprets the arguments of dissenters and defenders of grassland settlement. Here is material of great value in evaluating the overextended boomer promotions and the typical plainsmen's response.

The author, in his use of quotations, sometimes fails to question his sources. For example, when dealing with a reputed ninety thousand acres gained by a railroad in excess of its legal claim, he accepts newspaper comment that at ninety acres per farm this would provide ten thousand farms — a figure obviously ten times too large.

The author criticizes the absence of proper planning, the half-hearted and unscientific efforts to solve agricultural problems on the grasslands, but his own omissions are unexplained. There is no mention of the Timber Culture Act or of Hardy Webster Campbell's dry land farming schemes and the effect they had in attracting or holding settlement. There is no recognition that rainfall occurs in cycles, that geographical areas varied widely, that some years were well above average and some were abysmally below average. Emmons concentrates on the central plains because of the area's primacy in this last frontier, but he fails to recognize contemporary or earlier settlement in the Texas portion of the Great Plains.

These criticisms should, however, not minimize the value of the book, which spotlights the role of the grassland boomer in attracting immigrants to the area. Many settlers successfully confronted the harsh Great Plains conditions to build a new agricultural pattern in an area neither desert nor garden. Boomer literature was frequently irresponsible, but it did attract attention.

**Homer E. Socolofsky**, *professor of history at Kansas State University, is consulting editor of* Kansas Quarterly, *and past president of the Agricultural History Society.*

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# An Island Called California

REVIEWED BY DAVID CAVAGNARO

PINCHED BETWEEN MOUNTAINS and the sea, between cool forests and blistering deserts, there lies "an island called California," a land of singular beauty and much variety which, since the days of the gold rush, has lured people in unprecedented numbers as visitors and settlers.

**An Island Called California** by Elna Bakker *(University of California, Berkeley, 1971; 357 pp., illus., maps, charts, biblio., index, $10.00).*

Ask any summer traveler from the East Coast or from the Midwest; ask anyone who has come from the South or from the plains to live in California why he has come and you will hear the same, almost legendary answers many times repeated: superb climate, varied and beautiful scenery, the mountains, the desert, or the sea. Some will answer that they have come for good jobs; but what makes good jobs besides abundant resources—timber, minerals, some of the best farmland in the world, and people themselves, over twenty million of us who now occupy this land of miracles?

What are the real underlying qualities of California which have lured us and kept us here? They are qualities which most know intuitively but which we all must soon understand if we are to save California from its greatest danger, ourselves. They are the whys and hows of California's wildness, the reasons for the presence of all that we cherish; and Elna Bakker gives us the best single source of this understanding which has yet been published in her new book, *An Island Called California.*

Mrs. Bakker's title is superbly chosen. Because of the geographic and climatic barriers which surround it, California has had a rather independent history and, as in any other insular situation, many unique new plants and animals have evolved here while a few of the ancient species have remained alive. And so we have the endemic Monterey pine and cypress hugging the sea bluffs, and only a short distance away trees of another age, the redwoods, survive in a sort of protected climatic isolation.

In times past, California has been bracketed by glacial climates descending from the north and desert climates pushing up from the south, always nibbling away at the flora and fauna, altering what species were able to adapt, replacing those that could not with other forms from the north or from the south, and pushing still others like the redwood into protected nooks and crannies. Even longer ago parts of California were quite literally insular, separated as they were from the mainland by the sea during various periods of the geologic past.

All of the immense changes which millions of years have wrought upon the land have created the incredibly beautiful and complex landscape of the present California and have established the most diverse set of living things found anywhere in North America. This is the California which the author tempts us to explore with her.

The book begins along the Pacific Coast and takes us eastward across the central part of the state, over the Sierra Nevada, and southward through three desert provinces—the same journey employed in the stunning new Oakland Museum with which Mrs. Bakker has been associated. Along this transect we encounter nearly all the natural communities of California—the seashore, coastal pine and redwood forests, oak grassland, chaparral, marsh, all the vegetation zones of the Sierra, the high and low deserts, and many more in-between.

Elna Bakker's journey is not as linear as a drive across and down the state would be, for her story moves forward and backward in time and pokes into many small corners where the intricacies of the natural world can best be viewed.

We are given some remarkable insights into the pollination of pipevine and the desert yucca, the small world of the oak gall, the colonial behavior of the acorn woodpecker, and the succession of organisms in a decomposing log. The journey across California is thoroughly interspersed with threads of history — the building of mountains, the advance and retreat of glaciers, the balanced life-style of a peaceful native people, the lure of gold and timber and prairie, the taming of the great valley.

Mrs. Bakker, with the aid of numerous fine sketches by her husband, Gerhard Bakker, Jr., captures the dynamics of natural systems—the evolution of a Sierran pond, the cycling of elements in various ecosystems, formation of soil, the vast rhythms of uplift and erosion. We learn something about the interrelationships and dependencies which all Californians share, whether they are sea slug or Central Valley farmer.

Cursory as it must be, Elna Bakker's treatment of California ecology requires careful reading because it is exacting and packed with information. It is a book not to be taken lightly, especially because in coming closer to an understanding of the unique natural qualities of the region we are constantly reminded of our immense responsibilities as the dominant citizenry of this fragile island, California.

**David Cavagnaro,** *a teacher of the natural sciences, is co-author (with Ernest Braun) of* Living Water *(1971).*


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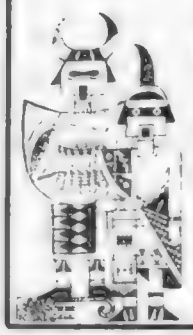

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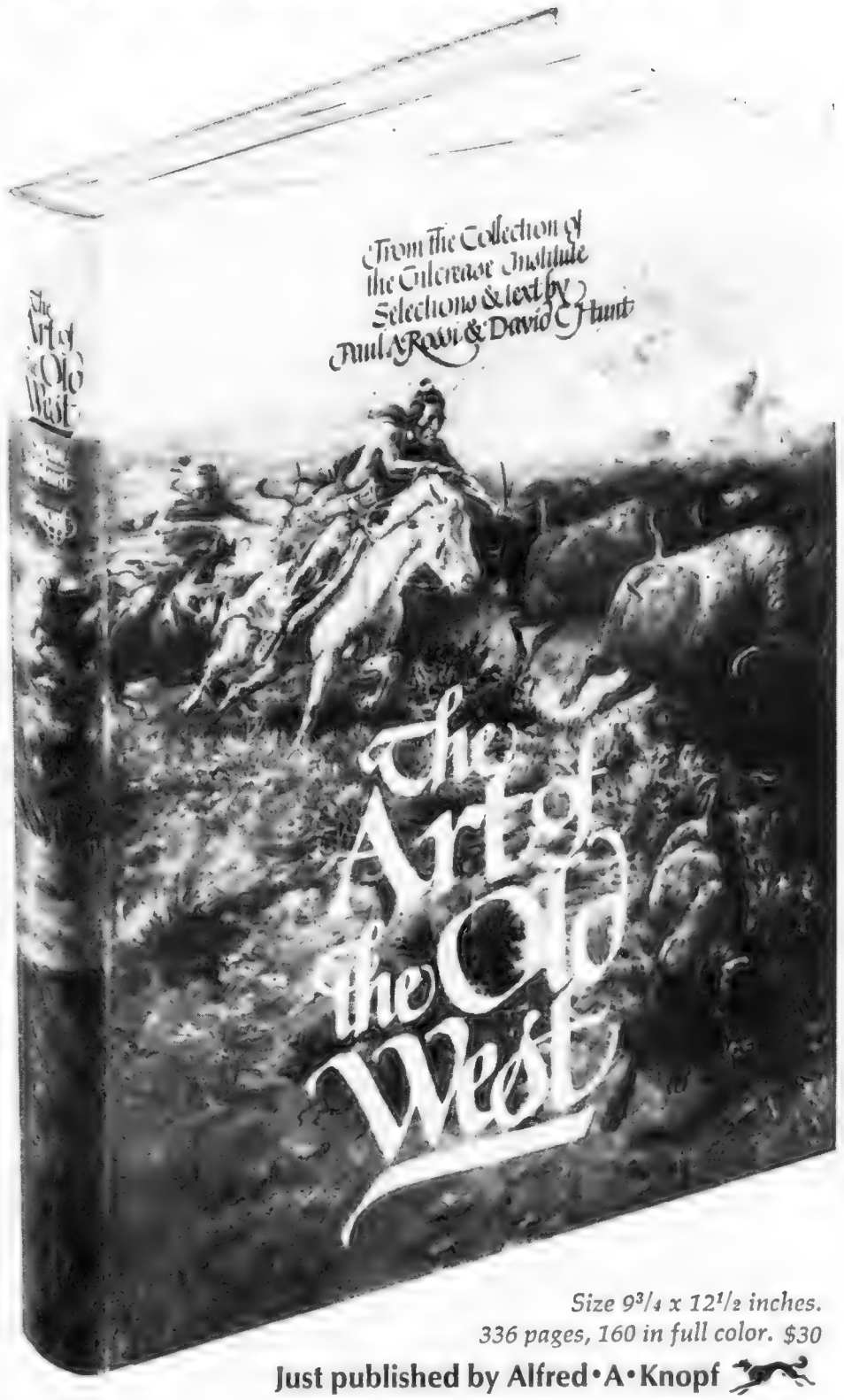


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# The Chickasaws

REVIEWED BY JACK BURROWS

INDIANS ARE "very big" this year. Bumper stickers proclaim Indian Power, exhort us to Remember Gall, Remember Crazy Horse, and remind us that Indians Discovered America and Custer Had It Coming. A sudden spate of books on Indians celebrate newly discovered Indian virtues while rediscovering the white man's cruelties and, with certain semisophisticated variations, come precariously close to transporting us back to the pieties and simplicities of James Fenimore Cooper's noble savage. In *We Talk, You Listen,* Sioux author Vine Deloria, Jr., tells us that "American society is unconsciously going Indian," and "the contest of the future is between a return to the castle or the tipi." Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*—currently a best seller—is a hortatory narrative of the western Indian wars in which all the villains are white. *The Memoirs of Chief Red Fox*—also a best seller—which purports to share with us the accumulated history and wisdom of a Sioux centenarian, is an incondite compilation of historical errors that maunders from boyish recollections of the sounds of the Custer battle to the nutritional benefits of black cigars.

**The Chickasaws** by Arrell M. Gibson *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1971; 312 pp., illus., maps, index, sources, $8.95).*

*The Chickasaws*, by Professor Arrell M. Gibson of the University of Oklahoma, restores one's sense of historical balance. There is no effort here to capitalize on the renascence of Indian history, no angry assertion that six hundred thousand Indians owned all of what is today the United States, no dire warning that we go Indian or face social disintegration, no lecture on the Indian as ecologist, no polemic on red nobility as opposed to white brutality. The body of Gibson's work establishes him as an authority on the Indian. He knows well the white man's inhumanity to the red man —his ruthless exploitation—and he permits himself a scholarly anger perceivable even through the impersonality of the academic idiom, though it neither intrudes nor reveals today's ideological uncertainties, and it is most often reflected in excellent use of quotations.

Meticulously documented, *The Chickasaws* is the first full-length treatment of the Chickasaw nation. But in a larger sense it is the history of the aboriginal peoples who lived between the eastern seaboard and the Mississippi in collision with a numerically and technologically superior Europeon culture. Like other tribes, the Chickasaws—a fierce warrior society whose domain was in Mississippi and Alabama—were introduced to European trade goods, which radicalized tribal structure, caused old laws and customs to falter and collapse, created identity crisis, commenced the shifting of leadership from the full-bloods to the mixed-bloods, and enabled France, Britain, and Spain to play the tribesmen off between them.

The ultimate disposition of the Chickasaw "problem," of course, was to be removal from ancestral lands to the trans-Mississippi West. The Chickasaws resisted heroically; they stalled, petitioned, pleaded, maneuvered legally, and eloquently expressed their emotional and spiritual ties to their land. But the "melancholy hegira" along their own "Trail of Tears" began in 1837. Oklahoma was their Gethsemane. In 1906 they ceased to exist as a nation.

While Gibson's sympathies must surely lie with the Chickasaws, he wisely eschews the re-creation of the noble savage. The Chickasaws not only trafficked in slaves, both red and black, but were themselves "dedicated slaveholders." Mixed-bloods calculatingly enhanced their own positions by arranging land cessions and treaties favorable to the whites—until the original ancestral lands were demanded. But cold, dispassionate history finds the Chickasaws free of the dissimulation, the greed, the bigotry that mark the passage of the white man.

**Jack Burrows** *is a history instructor at San Jose City College, California.*

## THE FIRST AMERICAN

*(Continued from page 49)*

analyses of the so-called mound builders of the Mississippi River drainage, while the other two deal with unfounded speculations about the "lost" continents of Atlantis and Mu and the late nineteenth-century hoax of the Cardiff Giant. While no reputable archaeologist takes credence in stories of sunken continents, there is a growing body of really exciting data relating to prehistoric trans-Pacific contacts with America's aborigines that Ceram unfortunately does not consider.

Although the Cardiff Giant had no impact in scientific archaeological circles of the time, for many years prehistorians doubted the possibility of the presence of Ice Age man in the New World. Ceram vividly relates these controversies and details the painstaking discoveries of evidence of early mammoth hunters some ten thousand years ago that, step by step, incontrovertibly demonstrated the existence of these very early *first* Americans.

Most authors would have concluded a book about North American prehistory on that note. But Ceram has one more treat in store for the reader. In his epilogue, he brings us almost up to the present as he relates the story of Ishi, the last aboriginal Indian discovered in the United States. Ishi, now so well known through the beautiful writing of Theodora Kroeber, was a Yana Indian of Northern California, the last of his tribe, encountered by white people in 1911.

While the serious student of archaeology might wish a more detailed treatment of the subject such as that presented in Jesse D. Jenning's *Prehistory of North America* or Gordon Willey's *An Introduction to American Archaeology*, Ceram's volume has its place also. It is easy to read, contains excellent and varied illustrations, and is well designed. For the host of people who are interested in an essentially accurate, nontechnical account of America's first inhabitants, this will be a worthwhile book.

**Robert C. Euler** *is professor of anthropology at Prescott College and has done extensive field research among the Indians of the Southwest and Great Basin. His most recent books (co-authored with Henry F. Dobyns) are* The Havasupai People *and* The Hopi People.


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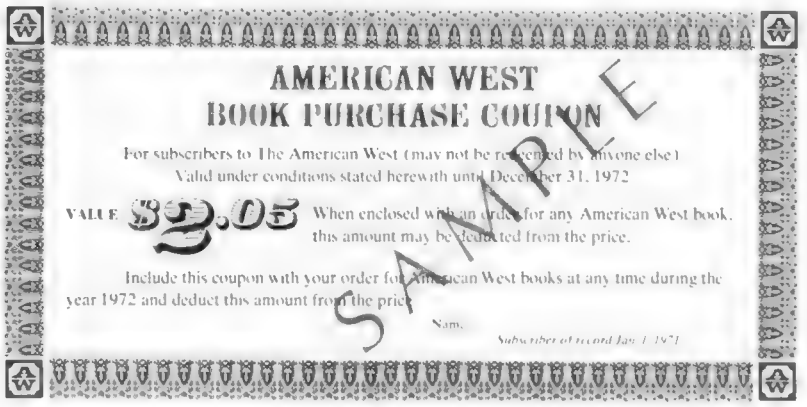
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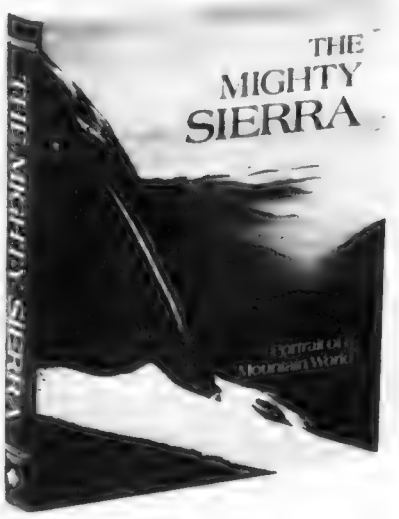


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**The American Southwest: Its Peoples and Cultures** by Lynn I. Perrigo *(Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1971; 469 pp., illus., maps, charts, biblio., index, $8.95).*

REVIEWED BY RICHARD G. LILLARD

PROFESSOR PERRIGO'S Southwest has boundaries that are strictly political, not climatological or ecological. His Southwest is a long, varied, arbitrary strip—all of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, from the humid redwood forests on the Oregon line to the bayous on the Louisiana border. Nevada and Utah are wholly excluded, as are the states of northern Mexico. The one unity Perrigo's Southwest has, in the first half of the book, is the activities of Spanish-speaking conquerors, settlers, exploiters, and defenders. In a sense, the whole volume is an account of what happened in certain Spanish and then Mexican territories before and after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase.

Indeed, Perrigo, a historian at New Mexico Highlands University, is at his best in his presentation of the Spanish and Mexican period and the conflict with Anglos in the band of territory between Monterey Bay and Galveston Island. He is also good on the American Civil War as experienced in the area and on Indian-Anglo conflict in New Mexico and Arizona up into the 1880s.

For the multitude of events from the 1890s on, Perrigo's geographical scope puts enormous pressure on him, and three-fourths of the way through the book, at about 1912, he pleads lack of space and begins to sample unevenly, in irregular chronology, a scattering of topics. He is sufficiently thorough on some subjects such as United States Indian policy since 1929, treatment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, or the Reies López Tijerina episode during the 1960s, but he slights matters such as oil, uranium, the new copper technology, the movie industry, and federally sponsored scientific and military research.

New Mexico and Arizona, the heartlands of anyone's Southwest, come off best, and Texas fares well, but of necessity California as a whole gets incomplete treatment. Except for its desert southern portion, California does not easily relate to the traditional southwestern story. The book lacks tie-ins, which could be substantial, to events in Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and the Mexicali area in Baja California. The concept of "Southwest" unnaturally eliminates the states of the Mexican "Northwest," which are part of a single environmental, economic, ethnic, and historical region. This is all partly explored, for instance, in Roger Dunbier's *The Sonora Desert: Its Geography, Economy, and People* (1968).

Perrigo's catch-all final chapter, "Cultural Maturity," touches on religion, education, and the arts, with little more than lists and statistics to support the value judgment of "maturity." Properly, since he is a historian, Perrigo makes no prophecy for the future, about which he is wise to be unsure.

The subtitle is misleading. The book is a standard academic history rather than any fresh reorganization of knowledge and insight around ethnic or historical groups and their civilizations. The cultural approach is better caught in Erna Fergusson's *New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples* (1964) or D. W. Meinig's *Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographic Change* (1971).

As a work of up-to-date scholarship the volume is accurate, solid, and comprehensive. The author has read widely, as his giant bibliography suggests. He is reportorial and largely impersonal.

In meeting the challenge of his huge scope of detailed subject matter, Perrigo is often densely factual. Many of his transitions are stilted: "Now, back to the Colorado River." But despite an addiction to the orthodox topic and the standard phrase, he does perform the feat of writing a book on the Southwest that omits mention of the Earp-Clanton fight in the OK Corral or the Bascom-Cochise fracas at Apache Pass. What the book does is to organize and present a mass of important material for the use of students and researchers who want a compact reference.


**Richard Lillard** *is co-author of* America in Fiction *and author of* Desert Challenge: An Interpretation of Nevada; The Great Forest; *and* Eden in Jeopardy. *He is professor of American Studies and English at California State College, Los Angeles.*

**The Cable Car in America** by George W. Hilton *(Howell-North Books, Berkeley, 1971; 484 pp., illus., maps, charts, biblio., index, $17.50).*

REVIEWED BY MERRILL J. MATTES

SAN FRANCISCO cable cars rank right up there with mother and apple pie as symbols of true-blue nostalgic America. It follows then that a big, lavishly illustrated, elaborate history of cable cars will find a substantial number of buyers willing, if not exactly eager, to pay the stylish price.

The eagerness factor might be enhanced by the realization that this is not just a history of the San Francisco variety—the first and last of its breed—but a fairly exhaustive history of all cable cars everywhere, including New Zealand, but mainly sixty-two different cable car companies in twenty-eight American cities.

The historical importance of the cable car lies solely in the fact that this was primarily a device of the Grover Cleveland era, to bridge the gap between horse cars and electric streetcars. Cable cars today are as anachronistic as the bustle. To some, their clanking survival in the age of outer space exploration is scarcely more remarkable than would be the sighting of pterodactyls over San Francisco Bay.

The golden age of cable or "wire rope" traction extended from 1882 to 1892; by 1906 most of these contraptions were extinct. The Bay City specimens have survived mainly because of the rebellion of romanticists and tourist promoters against myopic city supervisors. In truth, the San Francisco cable cars are not a transportation system but a living outdoor museum, glorified by their recognition as a national historic landmark.

George Hilton, professor of economics at U.C.L.A., has produced a virtual encyclopedia of American cable cars. In 484 pages and with the aid of 684 illustrations and maps, he examines every conceivable facet of cable-tram technology, economics, and urban geography.

The traction system was an adaptation of James Watt's invention, the stationary steam engine, to urban passenger transportation. With a conventional street grid system irrationally imposed on steep hills, and a climate favorable to primitive mechanisms, San Francisco was the logical candidate for the world's first commercial system — the Clay Street Railroad of 1873 developed by A. S. Hallidie and W. E. Eppelsheimer. Here, an effective though rigid replacement of the overworked urban dray horse was the germ of a revolution in urban transportation technology.

Rival systems flourished in San Francisco until over fifty miles of cable trackage (compared with less than five miles today) existed there prior to the 1906 earthquake disaster. The cable car went national in 1882 when its practicality in more rigorous climates was demonstrated by the success of the Chicago City Railway. The Windy City became the nation's most heavily used cable car system, with over seven hundred cars serving millions of commuters. In contrast to level Chicago, Kansas City rivaled San Francisco in hilliness, and so developed what Hilton calls "the most comprehensive" system.

There are fascinating chapters on each of the four prime elements of cable car technology—the grip, the cable, the conduit, and the powerhouse. Devotees of *Popular Mechanics* might best appreciate the ingenious applications of the laws of physics and the esoteric terminology involved here, with talk of terminal sheaves, depression pulleys, pull curves, double jaw side grips, and quadruple expansion engines.

Many Powell Street tourists of today have no idea that their picturesque conveyance is propelled by an endless cable moving at six or seven miles per hour—that is, they are so propelled when the gripman throws levers that grip this moving cable; conversely, they come to a halt when this grip is loosened. While the principle involved is simplicity itself, its successful application nationwide, with gradients, curves, loads, and weather variables, constantly challenged inventive genius.

In 1888 Frank J. Sprague came up with the first successful electric streetcar, and the doom of the cable car—a $125,000,000 investment — was sealed. The traction system was, the author insists, "the most economical method of urban public transportation," while it lasted. Thereafter it was in the white elephant category.

This brings us, finally, to the seamy side of cable car transportation. Cable traction systems were "expensive, inflexible and dangerous," with a high rate of bankruptcy and passenger accidents. Today's passengers are thrilled by their quaint Victorian experience but, according to Hilton, they are riding in a fool's paradise, sort of. "Rational as it may be for San Francisco to perpetuate the system, cable traction remains as dangerous a form of transportation as it ever was," and it harbors fruitful potentials of mechanical failure and "pilot error" aggravated by automobile traffic and spine tingling grades. (Cable trackage comprises 4 percent of the San Francisco Municipal Railway total, but yields 20 percent of the accident claims.)

The author urges certain traffic reforms which might make the antiquated system safer and thus more likely to survive "in a world its designers dreamed not of."

**Merrill J. Mattes** *is chief, Office of History and Historic Architecture, Western Service Center, National Park Service, San Francisco. He is author of* Great Platte River Road *(1969).*

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# BOOKS IN BRIEF

By Jane M. Offers

**Indian Man: A Life of Oliver La Farge** by D'Arcy McNickle *(Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1971; 242 pp., illus., biblio., index, $7.95).*

Involved with the American Indians and engaged in a struggle to improve their lot, La Farge was greatly interested in their life struggle. This biography follows his story, from his boyhood through the expeditions among various tribes, to his achievement as president of the Association of American Indian Affairs.

**Tell Them They Die: The Sequoyah Myth** by Traveller Bird *(Westernlore Publishers, Great West and Indian Series, Los Angeles, 1971; 148 pp., intro., illus., biblio., index, $7.95).*

The story of the real Sequoyah, as told by a direct Cherokee descendant. Much sensationalist writing has been produced concerning this revolutionary Cherokee, most of which is considered and proven untrue in this book by Traveller Bird, who has long had a deep interest in the ethnohistory and linguistics of his people and the American Indian in general.

**The Immortal San Franciscans: For Whom the Streets Were Named** by Eugene B. Block *(Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1971; 244 pp., intro., illus., appen., index, $7.95).*

A lively chronicle of the people who put San Francisco on the map and, in doing so, arrived there themselves. The sixty biographies and over one hundred names listed in the appendix should answer many long-standing questions regarding the growth of this historic city.

**Pioneer Kitchen: A Frontier Cookbook** by Ethel Reed *(Frontier Heritage Press, San Diego, 1971; 182 pp., illus., glossary, $6.95).*

A culinary collection which will delight the historian of heretofore lost, or soon-to-be-forgotten, recipes of the American frontier. Included are humorous anecdotes and various home remedies used long ago.

**Goliad Survivor: Isaac D. Hamilton** by Lester Hamilton *(Naylor Company, San Antonio, 1971; 74 pp., biblio., $4.95).*

Hamilton's story—as verified by his own and other affidavits in the Texas Archives—of his escape from the Goliad Massacre in the waning days of the Texas revolution. The critical days following the massacre at Goliad are drawn in clear perspective.

**Big Men Walked Here! The Story of Washington-on-the-Brazos** by Stanley Siegel *(Jenkins Publishing, Austin, Texas, 1971; 103 pp., illus., $6.95).*

Relating the past of Washington-on-the-Brazos, "Old Washington," and the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence, the author traces the early development of Texas from the colonization activities of Stephen F. Austin, through the events of the Texas revolution, to the remarkable days of the Republic of Texas.

**The Hopi People** by Robert C. Euler and Henry F. Dobyns *(Indian Tribal Series, limited edition, Phoenix, 1971; 106 pp., illus., notes).*

The past of the Hopi people, as archaeologists have explored and attempted to explain their beginnings and evolvement to their present stone villages at the southern edge of the large and dominant Black Mesa, in Arizona. The authors—both of whom have spent much time in field research and anthropological study of the Indians—have compiled an admirable work on these ancient people.

**The Look of Old Time Washington** by Lucile McDonald and Werner Lenggenhager *(Superior Publishing, Seattle, 1971; 159 pp., illus., index, $12.95).*

The authors have caught the broad scope of Washington's history in numerous photographs and a well-researched text. From city to village, train station to jailhouse, the state's past is reviewed and memories rekindled.

## LIEUTENANT HENRY O. FLIPPER

*(Continued from page 17)*

the Negro officer were "of a friendly character." Although his contact with Flipper did not extend beyond the realm of official duty, he felt that he had never exhibited the prejudice that might be expected of persons "when they were brought together with *them* [author's emphasis] officially." Thereafter a thinly concealed thread of bias pervaded Wilhelmi's testimony. Eventually his gratuitous interjections of suspicion became so manifest that Captain Barber felt entirely justified in accusing him of harboring a grievance "toward the accused that he had succeeded perhaps in winning laurels at West Point which *his* sickness prevented him from obtaining, although he had the unusual opportunity of having been turned back a year into Mr. Flipper's class."

In his own defense, both before the court-martial board and later before the House Committee on Military Affairs, Lieutenant Flipper maintained that never prior to August 10, 1881, did he suspect any deficiency greater than several hundred dollars. While preparing the funds for transmittal, however, he discovered an unexplained deficit of $2,074.26. Because of his "peculiar situation" and knowing Colonel Shafter "by reputation and observation to be a severe, stern man," he decided to conceal his embarrassment and "endeavor to work out the problem alone."

Although unwilling, or unable, to place responsibility for the disappearance of the funds on any specific officers, he suddenly recalled menacing omens previously ignored. Flipper testified that he had been warned that Shafter would grasp at the first opportunity to place him in an embarrassing position. On numerous occasions civilians at the post cautioned him that certain officers there were plotting to force him out of the army. The state hide inspector, warning him of impending danger early in July 1881, revealed that Lieutenant Wilhelmi, then in command of a scouting party, boasted that he had "found a way to get rid of the nigger."

[Later, as reported in the *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis) of November 3, 1883, the correspondent conducting this interview had found the ex-lieutenant working in a steam laundry in El Paso while awaiting consideration of his case in Congress. Flipper had maintained that he knew who had stolen the commissary funds but could offer no concrete proof. Interviews with several of his fellow officers indicated the difficulties that faced the black man in his continuing struggle to obtain justice. Major Anson Mills of the Tenth Cavalry, whom Flipper considered a friend, stated that "Flipper was a rather popular man, kept his place and did not obtrude. I do not think he was treated exactly right, but I would not for a moment advocate his reinstatement. . . . His commission made him an officer and a gentleman, but then, you know, one couldn't meet a colored man on social equality." An unidentified officer added that ". . . Col. Shafter was as much to blame as Flipper, for it is the duty of the commanding officer to go over the accounts and cash of his commissary before they are sent . . . Shafter did not do this, but let Flipper run and then jumped him. . . . Flipper's points are well taken and if he were a white man he would upset the verdict and sentence; but he is a colored man, and I for one would not vote for any colored man being an officer. . . . Our wives and daughters must be considered." The article apparently created a considerable amount of controversy in El Paso and prompted a reply from Flipper addressed to "Mr. F. W. May, Newspaper Correspondent, El Paso, Texas," November 15, 1883. In this letter Flipper repeated his conviction that the money had been stolen from him by a commissioned officer and attempted to correct what he felt were misconceptions created by Mr. May's interviews.]

However, Flipper contended that he failed to exercise caution even after observing Wilhelmi and others suspiciously prowling about in the vicinity of his quarters late at night. As a result, once he discovered the deficiency, Flipper determined to keep his own counsel while attempting to recoup the loss.

Concluding the argument of the defense, Captain Barber concentrated upon the motives compelling Lieutenant Flip-

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per to mislead his commanding officer. The prosecution not only had failed to prove that his client had "intentionally, wilfully [*sic*] and wrongfully converted the public money with which he was trusted to his own personal use and benefit," but could offer no evidence that either the government or any individual lost "a picayune" in the affair.

Moreover, the defense counsel noted that no difficulty occurred so long as the lieutenant's financial transactions remained under the close supervision of an officer experienced in business matters and cognizant of the proper administrative duties of a post commander.

Under Shafter's lax command, however, Flipper ". . . unexperienced in business methods . . . and careless to a fault in the management of his financial transactions, . . . believing implicitly in the honesty of everybody around him and trusting with a blind confidence that everything would come out all right, . . . was not calculated to carry on the transactions of a financial responsibility with safety to himself, except for short periods and under the supervision of those more experienced than himself." The young lieutenant thus found himself suddenly burdened with a responsibility beyond his comprehension "which through inexperience and carelessness led to accidents which he did not foresee."

Nor did Captain Barber, in light of the black lieutenant's solitary struggle for acceptance in a white man's army, deem it peculiar that Flipper should seek to conceal his embarrassment from his mercurial colonel while attempting to rectify the situation. Pleading for understanding, the captain reminded the board of white officers: "From the time when a mere boy he stepped upon our platform and asked the privilege of competing with us for the prizes of success he had to fight the battle of life . . . alone. He has had no one to turn to for counsel or sympathy. Is it strange then that when he found himself confronted with a mystery he could not solve, he should hide it in his own breast and endeavor to work out the problem alone as he had been compelled to do all the other problems of his life?"

The defense counsel sought to bolster his plea for leniency by directing the attention of the court to the unusual degree of punishment already inflicted upon the accused. By virtue of the peculiar nature of Lieutenant Flipper's position as the only black officer in the United States Army, his entire career served as a focus for both benevolent and malicious public interest. Hence, forced to serve as a symbol of his race, "the very publicity of his career led him into those concealments and evasions which his embarrassments rendered necessary."

Now, once again, Flipper found himself a convenient target for the slander and castigation of the racist press of the nation. Therefore, Captain Barber concluded. "Tried and punished by the commanding officer of this post with a severity which is unexampled in the history of the service, tried and punished by the trumpet voice of the press which has heralded every idle dream of suspicion as the burden of my client's sin, he now comes before *you* to be tried again and he asks you . . . if he has not been punished enough for the errors into which he was led by circumstances."

The court apparently recognized the absence of evidence of actual theft on the part of the accused officer and yet seemed unimpressed by the defense counsel's arguments for leniency. On December 8, 1881, Henry O. Flipper was found not guilty of embezzlement but guilty of the charge of "conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman" and was sentenced "to be dismissed from the service of the United States."

On January 2, 1882, General C. C. Augur approved the proceedings of the court and its finding of guilty on the second charge. He disapproved, however, the ruling of not guilty to the charge of embezzlement, "the evidence seeming, in the opinion of the reviewing authority [Captain John W. Clous] to fully establish the allegations in the specifications. . . ." D. G. Swaim, judge advocate general of the army, also reviewed the transcript of the court-martial and addressed a letter to Robert Todd Lincoln, secretary of war, recommending that the sentence "be confirmed but mitigated to a less degree of punishment," adding that Lieutenant Flipper evidently did not intend to defraud the government as his conduct appeared "attributable to carelessness and ignorance of correct business methods."

Furthermore, Swaim noted "that there is no case on record in which an officer was treated with such personal harshness and indignity upon the cause and grounds set forth as was Lieut. Flipper by Col. Shafter and the officers who searched his person and quarters taking his watch and ornaments from him, especially as they must have known . . . that there was no real grounds for such action." No evidence exists, however, indicating that the judge advocate general's recommendation of leniency reached the secretary of war. If considered, Swaim's opinion was clearly ignored. For on June 24, 1882, President Chester A. Arthur rendered final confirmation of the verdict and sentence of the court-martial board, and on June 30, 1882, the officer corps of the United States Army regained its "racial purity."

Thus, Henry Ossian Flipper received a painful reminder that justice for the black man was a patronizing boon granted at the whim of a white society. As Captain Barber admonished the court, "The question is before you whether it is possible for a colored man to secure and hold a position as an officer of the army. . . ." The department commander, the secretary of war, and the president of the United States, in dismissing the army's only black officer, tacitly voiced their opinion that no Negro was fit to bear the responsibility and prestige attached to the uniform of an officer of the United States Army.

Flipper engaged in a lengthy process of attempting to be reinstated to his commission but, due to his political naiveté, was taken advantage of by several different lawyers and never accomplished his goal. At one time, he was promised an audience with President McKinley, by his current lawyer, and went to Washington, D. C. He found himself at the end of a reception line, however, and only got to shake the president's hand.

Flipper became a successful mining engineer in the Southwest, and spent quite a bit of time in Mexico and South America. Eventually, he was appointed a special assistant to the U. S. secretary of the interior. When Flipper died in 1940, his brother completed the death certificate. Next to the word *occupation*, he wrote "Retired Army Officer."

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

This study is based primarily upon material in "Records Relating to the Army Career of Henry Ossian Flipper, 1873–1882" (RRACHF), microcopy no. T 1027, roll no. 1, National Archives. In addition to numerous pieces of official correspondence, this collection includes the complete "Record of

the Court-Martial of Second Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper" (RCM) and "Petition for Restoral to the Service: Statement and Brief of Petitioner in the Matter of the Court-Martial of Henry Ossian Flipper, Second Lieutenant, Tenth Cavalry, U. S. Army," U. S. Congress, House Committee on Military Affairs, 55th Cong., 2nd sess., 1899.

The autobiography of Henry O. Flipper, *The Colored Cadet at West Point* (New York, 1878) remains an essential source for material on his early life and cadet days. Henry O. Flipper, *Negro Frontiersman: The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, First Negro Graduate of West Point*, ed. by Theodore D. Harris (El Paso, 1963), traces the author's career from his arrival in Texas in 1877 to 1916.

Contemporary periodicals and newspapers exhibited an unusual degree of interest in the army's only black officer. Brief articles describing Flipper's progress at West Point appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, XVII, No. 856 (May 24, 1873), 453, and again in XXI, No. 1071 (July 7, 1877), 519. The *San Antonio Daily Express*, November 2–December 14, 1881, contains almost daily summaries of the court-martial proceedings.

Secondary sources concerned with the career of Henry O. Flipper include William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, 1967) and Ezra J. Warner, "A Black Man in the Long Gray Line," *American History Illustrated*, IV, No. 9 (January 1970), 30–38, both of which include brief accounts of the events leading to the black lieutenant's dismissal from the army.

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Of additional assistance was correspondence with Nicholas J. Blesser, historian, Fort Davis National Historical Site, Fort Davis, Texas; Arthur Cromwell, Jr., associate producer, KUON-TV, Lincoln, Nebraska; and Stanley P. Tozeski, chief, USMA Archives, West Point, New York.

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## OUR FRONTIER HERITAGE

*(Continued from page 47)*

the exploitation of nature—everything else could be subordinated to the acquisitiveness of the individual.

The well known wastefulness of pioneers grew out of all these attitudes. It was evidenced by the litter that emigrants tossed aside. When inexperienced pioneers set out on the road to Oregon or California, they attempted to take with them many belongings they thought they could not do without. As they discovered they could not haul everything across several hundred miles of wilderness, the overland trails became cluttered with discarded furniture, clothing, tools, and trash.

The frontier experience reinforced other attitudes and characteristics which were harmful to the environment, too. Frontier lawlessness and Indian conflicts bred a common disrespect for life in general. The Indians, like the forests, were obstacles to be elimnated in order to get on with the tasks of exploitation. The fact that the public domain could be and was utilized without obtaining title from the government nor compensating the public treasury for what was taken—be it furs, lumber, minerals, grass, or crops — was not conducive to conservation. The anti-intellectualism of people who made their livelihood by exploiting natural resources, who measured progress by quantity, pursued material ends, and practiced economic individualism, meant that thoughtful observers and reformers found little hearing. Conservationists were, and sometimes still are, viewed as subversives in some western regions.

A perceptive summary of frontier attitudes and beliefs was provided by Britain's Lord James Bryce in the 1880s:

*All the passionate eagerness, all the strenuous effort of the Westerns is directed towards the material development of the country. To open the greatest number of mines and extract the greatest quantity of ore, to scatter cattle over a thousand hills, to turn the flower-spangled prairies . . . into wheatfields, to cover the sunny slopes . . . with vines and olives: this is the end and aim of their lives, this is their daily and nightly thought— . . . To have an immense production of exchangeable commodities, to force from nature the most she can be made to yield, and send it east and west by the cheapest routes to the dearest markets, making one's city a centre of trade, and raising the price of its real estate—this . . . is preached by Western newspapers as a kind of religion. . . .*

*These people are intoxicated by the majestic scale of the nature in which their lot is cast, enormous mineral deposits, boundless prairies, forests which, even squandered—wickedly squandered —as they now are, will supply timber to the United States for centuries; a soil which, with the rudest cultivation, yields the most abundant crops, a populous continent for their market. They see all round them railways being built, telegraph wires laid, steamboat lines across the Pacific projected, cities springing up in the solitudes, and settlers making the wilderness to blossom like the rose. Their imagination revels in these sights and signs of progress, and they gild their own struggles for fortune with the belief that they are the missionaries of civilization and the instruments of Providence in the greatest work the world has seen.*

WHETHER THEY CAME as traders, miners, farmers, or townsite developers, the majority of pioneers did not attempt to live in harmony with the ecological system they invaded. The fur traders and trappers were often the first, after the Indians, to penetrate a region. They blazed trails over long distances, established first contacts with Indians, tapped the rich stores of pelts awaiting them in the wilderness, and reported back about the lands and the economic potential they had discovered. The Indians were the unfortunate victims of the white man's diseases, and with the introduction of firearms and mechanical implements, the Indian way of life was dramatically changed.

Because enormous profits were reported in the early years of the far-western fur trade, many opportunists were attracted. The result was eventually overtrapping and a growing scarcity of the beaver which formed the foundation of the trade. At a later date the destruction of the buffalo provided another example. Whereas those shaggy beasts had once been killed for the meat, hides, and bones, they were later killed just for the hides, some for the tongue alone, and

others were shot down for the pure sport of it. Perhaps as many as one hundred million head of buffalo were slaughtered in a period of less than forty years. The virtual extermination of the grizzly bear, which once ranged over most of the Far West, was another ruthless attack on the animal life of the frontier. Thus the fur traders skimmed a little wealth from the surface and opened the way for other pioneers, but the ecological effects of destruction have not been evaluated.

One of the most obviously destructive frontiersmen was the miner. Rodman W. Paul, leading authority on the mining rushes of the Far West, said of the mining frontier, "Nearly everything it attempted was done wastefully."

They cut timber from the public domain to use in the mines and smelters, diverted streams and built canals, and generally showed little concern for the future. In their greed they often wasted as much as they took. In California, for example, hydraulic mining was so wasteful that from 25 to 60 percent of the gold was lost in the process. Furthermore, mining camps were filthy. There seems to be no doubt about it—miners fouled their own nests at a prodigious rate. Perhaps the transitory nature of the industry increased their proclivity to pollute.

Robert Athearn's brief appraisal in his book, *High Country Empire*, of the conduct of Rocky Mountain miners was applicable to those in other regions as well: "As a rule, they brought nothing except essential equipment, dug ruthlessly at the hills, and moved on, contributing only collapsing shanties surrounded by piles of rubbish."

CATTLEMEN moved westward throughout the frontier era, from colonial times to the late nineteenth century. The rise and decline of the range-cattle industry on the Great Plains after the Civil War illustrates the exploitative nature of this frontier wave. High prices for cattle led to overstocking of the ranges, overgrazing, and a precarious economic situation for ranchers.

Some made enormous profits before ruining the open-range industry and forcing more scientific ranching practices, including conservation of grass and water. Because many short-sighted pioneer cattlemen subscribed to the "git and git out" philosophy of extracting surface wealth from the land, leaving ravaged remains to the next generation, the wasteful and ecologically dangerous practices of Americans have been dubbed the "cowboy economy," although actually the cowboy was merely the pawn of the rancher.

America was, until the late nineteenth century, primarily a nation of farmers, and farmers made up the bulk of frontier settlers. Many moved westward to escape the abused soils they occupied, only to abuse the new land and later leave it for something believed to be better. What they left behind in the East was described by one of them, a farmer from Virginia, John H. Craven:

. . . [The] *soil was of the very best quality, and susceptible to the highest degree of improvement, but . . . had at the same time been* butchered *by that most horrible mode of culture adopted by the first settlers of this country. The practice then was to clear the land, to put it in tobacco for three or four years in succession, according to the strength of the soil, afterwards in corn and wheat alternately, or corn and oats so long as it was capable of producing anything. . . .*

*We had but one alternative in this state of things, either to improve and restore the soil, or to remove to some new and better country; which latter course was the most common—the majority of farmers, after they had impoverished their lands, preferring to leave the improvement of them to others, rather than undertake it themselves.*

Another farmer, H. O. Kelly, indicated much about the pioneers' use of the land when he related his experiences on a farm in Polk County, Missouri:

*. . . That land was just plumb worn out and I didn't have sense enough to know it. In those old days farmers used to brag about how many farms they had worn out. Those old boys used to say "Why, son, by the time I was your age I had wore out three farms."*

It was an oft-repeated story—cotton in the South, corn in the Great Plains, wheat in the Pacific Northwest, and other crops in other regions. The habits of many of the nation's farmers were conditioned by several generations of soil abuse, and long after the last frontiers had been occupied, some were still reluctant to adopt conservation methods.

The frontier heritage did not fit the nation well for survival in the industrial, urban civilization that became dominant in the twentieth century. This kind of society has needs which are in conflict with the way the pioneers lived and used the land. First, it needs population control, for overcrowding is detrimental to human existence. When there was a low man-to-land ratio, individuals could do their own thing; as population density increased, it became more and more difficult and unwise to do so. Second, today's society needs conservation, which is simply the intelligent use of resources, including preservation and recycling—the opposite of wastefulness. Third, it needs a new concept of progress, one which emphasizes quality rather than quantity. Fourth, it needs a community ethic in place of economic individualism and the profit motive.

In his book, *The Roots of Lawlessness*, Henry Steele Commager expressed the requirement in an eloquent passage:

*A nation with, in Jefferson's glowing words, "land enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation" could indulge itself in reckless exploitation of that land—the mining of natural resources, the destruction of deer and bison and beavers, of the birds in the skies and the fish in the streams, and could even (this was risky business from the beginning) afford to ignore its fiduciary obligations to coming generations without exciting dangerous resentment. But a nation of more than two hundred million, working through giant corporations and giant governments that ravage, pollute, and destroy on a scale heretofore unimagined, cannot afford such self-indulgence. Nor can it persist in its habit of violating its fiduciary obligations without outraging those who are its legal and moral legatees.*

There is no room left in today's society for the outmoded frontier attitudes—nor is there any excuse for them to continue. It is perhaps easy to conjecture that man will proceed on his wasteful path, but fortunately evidence exists that can lead to a more optimistic outlook.

The conservationist movements are becoming stronger, with ever-growing numbers. Throughout America is a general awakening by the people and, consequently, by the government as well. The danger, as population and pollu-

tion continue to increase, cannot be dismissed; but perhaps there is reason for optimism. While we accept the fact that the wilderness and the lost species and the barren hillsides cannot be restored, the land that is left will be considered as a part of our irreplaceable heritage.

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Although the literature concerning the current ecological situation is growing voluminously, no thorough historical study of Americans and their environment exists. In addition to the brief comments of numerous foreign travelers, the following studies are recommended for further reading: Hans Huth, *Nature and the American* (University of California, Berkeley, 1957); Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., *Man and Nature in America* (Columbia University, New York, 1963); Stewart L. Udall, *The Quiet Crisis* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963); Ray A. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1966); and Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Yale University, New Haven, 1967) and *American Environment* (Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass., 1968). The author will furnish detailed footnotes for the accompanying article upon request.

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## THE RODILLA TOWERS

*(Continued from page 11)*

tower, 104 feet, would be subjected to ten thousand pounds of pull. If it did not hold, the towers would be razed.

The day of the test, huge crowds of onlookers milled at the scene. At home, thousands watched on television as the winch-powered cable was attached to the tower to perform its noxious task. The cable tightened. The crowd was silent. The cable was straining. A great roar rose from the multitude, then laughter. The cable had snapped; the tower was standing.

Today, the towers are part of a city beautification program and will serve as the focal point in a park to be developed in Watts. Thousands of visitors will continue to marvel at the bedazzling fence, the fireplace, a fountain, a pathway, and urns, walls, benches, and nameless curving forms.

There are dozens of theories as to why Rodilla built the towers, from the cynical one of Rodilla, "the reformed boozer," using the empty bottles he had drunk to decorate his creation, to the one of Rodilla, "the mystic," building his towers for thirty-three years, the life span of Jesus Christ, and using the triangle of well known religious significance as the form of the outer wall, and the twelve towers for the twelve apostles, with the three tall towers in the center representing the Trinity, and so on.

Rodilla never offered an explanation for his strange undertaking. Perhaps the reason is in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words: "Beauty is its own excuse for being."

**V. P. Chernik** *is a professional writer whose works include* The Claims Game *and* The Consumer's Guide to Insurance Buying.

## AUSPICIOUS AGREEMENT

*(Continued from page 43)*

Juárez demanded that Vidaurri yield up the revenues of the Piedras Negras customhouse to the federal government. When the *caudillo* refused, Juárez marched on the headstrong Vidaurri's headquarters in Monterrey, hoping to subdue him and align him with the national government, just as he had the governors of San Luis Potosí and Tamaulipas. He found Vidaurri completely implacable and was repulsed once, before finally entering the city on April 2, 1864. Vidaurri had already fled to Texas, where he sought refuge in Houston, where General Magruder had his Department of Texas headquarters.

Vidaurri's usefulness to the South had ended. He returned to Mexico after a few weeks, swore allegiance to the puppet emperor Maximilian, and served in his cabinet until execution at the hands of General Porfirio Díaz after the capital fell into patriot hands.

The Rio Grande trade, however, did not depend upon Vidaurri. After Juárez established himself in Monterrey, Quintero reached agreements with his administration similar to those extended by Vidaurri. Then when Juárez was forced to continue his pilgrimage into Chihuahua, Quintero negotiated trade pacts with the French invaders, who were just as liberal as their Mexican "hosts" had been. The trade continued until the end of the war.

There was no need for the Mexican "escape route" once the Union lifted its efficient blockade (one out of four runners had been captured by the end of the war). The regular trade channels resumed operation, with the Brownsville–Matamoras, the Laredo–Nuevo Laredo, and the Eagle Pass–Piedras Negras points returning to something approximating normal. Firm trade patterns had been established which remain—in fact are increasing, as government tariff policies permit—today.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The most important sources for the trade itself are Frank L. Owsley's *King Cotton Diplomacy; Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (Chicago, 1959), and Quintero's correspondence with the Confederate State Department in the John T. Pickett Papers, Library of Congress. Also important is the correspondence between Vidaurri and Quintero and other notable southern officials in the Vidaurri Papers, Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León, Monterrey.

Also helpful are Santiago Roel's (ed.) *Correspondencia particular de D. Santiago Vidaurri, gobernador de Nuevo León (1855–1864)* (Monterrey, 1946); Vito Alessio Robles's *Monterrey en la historia y en la leyenda* (Mexico, 1936); José Fuentes Mares's *Juárez y la intervención* (Mexico, 1962); Ralph Roeder's *Juárez and His Mexico* (2 vols., New York, 1947), and Edward H. Moseley's "The Public Career of Santiago Vidaurri, 1855–1858," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1963).

For information regarding Confederate operations in Texas see James L. Nichol's *The Confederate Quartermaster in the Trans-Mississippi* (Austin, 1964) and LeRoy P. Graf's "The Economic History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 1820–1875," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942). Of course, the official records of the *War of the Rebellion* contain countless valuable documents.

**Ronnie C. Tyler** *is curator of history at the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, Texas. The accompanying article is excerpted from a forthcoming book written by Tyler, to be published this spring by the Texas State Historical Association.*

## CLEARCUT: IN REPLY

*(Continued from page 48)*

fir and you will note that they are of similar height and age.

No one will say that fresh clearcuts are pretty to look at. They aren't. And neither are natural clearcuts — those caused by cataclysmic events such as fire, landslides, volcanic activity, avalanches, wind, and disease. Most of the magnificent mature stands of Douglas-fir today resulted from such events. They grew on their own, before man was around to manage the woodlands. Such clearcuts were natural, and it was natural for Douglas-fir to grow there.

Our clearcuts are different than nature's because we control the size, protect the site, and make sure new trees get started. But still they are not pretty. Ralph Nader's task force found that "... too few people realize that appropriate logging practices depend on ecological considerations, and good ecology is not always the same as a pleasing appearance in the short run. Ecological rather than aesthetic variables should dictate logging and regeneration practices. Clearly, the most important consideration in a commercial forest is the biology of the tree species to be managed." ("Power and Land in California," The Ralph Nader Task Force, 1:4, 44, 1971.) We have realized that for a long time. Trees do grow!

Nancy Wood overlooked the fact that the National Forests are under scientific management. She has overlooked a lot of things — that the two billion board feet harvested last year in California's National Forests is in balance with what we can produce, providing we continue to use the prescribed silviculture methods that are effective with the tree species. She overlooked the hundreds of thousands of acres of National Forest land where harvest and replanting of trees is only incidental to the primary purpose of maintaining a beautiful and vigorous canopy of trees.

The article did not show small trees growing in a recent patch-cut, or pictures where even-aged stands of Douglas-fir trees now grow as the result of uncontrolled fire or early clearcuts.

The article is shallow and incomplete. Why cheapen the real issue of even-aged management with irrelevant, misleading rhetoric? I invite Miss Wood on a trip to one of our National Forests in the great American West. There is a lot to see about the technology and planning involved in modern land management.

Douglas R. Leisz
*Regional Forester*
*National Forests of California*
*San Francisco*

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# THE AMERICAN WEST

**LT. LORENZO LORAIN:** When most famous photographers of the Northwest were still confined to their studios in the 1800s, Lorain was wandering through the natural surroundings of that country and recording early Oregon in rare photographs, to be reproduced in the March issue with accompanying text by Alan Clark Miller.

**LETTERS OF FREDERIC REMINGTON:** A remarkable discovery of never-before published letters written by Frederic Remington to his friend Owen Wister, including original Remington sketches shown for the first time.

**TO BUILD A FORT:** In 1860, Nevada was Utah Territory and had undergone a major Indian war. To protect Comstock miners and the Overland Road, Fort Churchill was built at the Big Bend of the Carson River. The story of the fort's construction is narrated by Ferol Egan.

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